



Democracy in the Turmoil of the Future

Mika Mannermaa

Cover: Statue "Future" by Wäinö Aaltonen, 1932/1969
Bronze. Eduskunta, Parliament of Finland, Assembly Chamber

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Societal influence
within a new frame of reference

Mika Mannermaa

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To the reader

Since it was set up in 1993, the Committee for the Future of the Finnish Parliament has touched on the subject of democracy in many ways. However, it is only now as its mandate draws to an end that the Committee for the Future has decided to address this subject specifically. The decision was not an easy one. Democracy is a difficult and challenging subject.

To provide background for its debate, the Committee commissioned a report from futures researcher Dr Mika Mannermaa. Produced in conjunction with the Committee as part of the Parliament's centenary anniversary and launched to coincide with the Pori Jazz Festival in summer 2006, first a book with an international focus *Democracy and Futures* was published (appeared later in Finnish as *Demokratian tulevaisuudet*). The focus then shifted to Finland, and the Committee is now delighted to publish this book *Democracy in the turmoil of the future*. Thanks are due to Mika Mannermaa.

We can all assess the result for ourselves. I can already report that the Committee has received a great deal of input to its own work, particularly in what is an election year. It has also become clear that the next committee will have to consider the ideas and concrete proposals made in the book in its work on futures policy. At the very least, the following ideas and issues require further political discussion.

- The different manifestations of democracy in the future – what direction will the Finnish model move in? What is happening at European and global level? What ought to happen?
- The relationship between democracy and freedom is multifaceted, and democracy is a demanding system, the models of which have to be constantly reformed, inter alia by exploiting the opportunities provided by technology.
- The idea of there being democracy everywhere in the world is rather problematic – in some parts of the world there has never been a model of a functioning democracy – and it takes time for democracy to develop. Can democracy be exported at all?

- If parliamentary democracy is on the decline even in developed countries and citizens' trust in it is fading, we have to prepare ourselves for dangerous setbacks even in developed democracies. In a democracy even the worst threat scenario has to be prepared for using democratic means.
- We have to develop our ability to recognise new contemporary phenomena in democracy as opportunities as well as threats.
- The “every man’s weapon of mass destruction” phenomenon raised in *Democracy and Futures* will in itself pose new challenges for societal governance, both at national and supranational levels.
- In spite of the difficulties it faces, parliamentary democracy is an important and positive thing – it has to be taken care of.

The Committee for the Future’s Democracy publication and the Russia 2017: Three scenarios publication, which will be completed almost simultaneously, have in common the fact that the future is in part being examined rather actively. This may well be due to the subject matter and the mandate of the committee. In all its reports on democracy, the Committee for the Future has been assisted by a steering group chaired by Deputy Chairman Kalevi Olin and comprising the following members of parliament: Kyösti Karjula, Päivi Räsänen, Esko-Juhani Tennilä, Anne Huotari and Jyrki Kasvi. Each of them deserves my heartfelt thanks.

Democracy has long been the subject of philosophical interest. In J V Snellman’s bicentenary year, it is appropriate to end with a few thoughts from our philosopher, who reflected a great deal on matters of state, dating from 1863 (Political Studies Lecture Series, p. 341, Helsinki 2004):

“It may be said that the duty of the nation is to act for the good of humanity. Cosmopolitan interest should thus guide our action. But there is no rational basis for such an interest. No one can know what humanity desires – nor for that matter does humanity exist as yet – it is still unborn. The interests of humanity form part of the interests of each nation, i.e. the interests of each nation require attention to be paid to its relationship with other nations. There is awareness of this in Christian nations, and a system of states is currently weaving a web around the world – so that European nations are dependent upon what happens in America, India, China, Japan and Australia. And vice versa. What all these circumstances demand of nations – that a person can know – and such we can at least demand of him. And patriotism provides an outlook - cosmopolitanism as an interest is empty speculation.”

Jyrki Katainen

Chair of the Committee for the Future

Foreword by the author

In 1906 the Assembly of Representatives of the Estates approved a new act of parliament which brought about a modern single-chamber parliamentary assembly as well as universal and equal suffrage. At the same time, democracy was extended to encompass a greater proportion of the male population and women received full state rights, which were exercised for the first time in parliamentary elections held the following year. In the 1907 elections, 19 female members were elected to the Finnish Parliament. In 2007, 100 years will have passed since the first plenary session of the single-chamber Finnish Parliament in its current form.

In 1993 the Finnish Parliament set up a temporary Committee for the Future to draft opinions on the positions taken by the Finnish government. This was preceded by an initiative signed in 1992 by 167 members of parliament, according to which the government should present the Parliament with a report on the perspectives for Finland's long-term development. The Committee for the Future has been a permanent committee since 2000, when Finland's new constitution entered into force.

The Committee for the Future is unique in its kind: it is through it that Finnish parliamentarianism has served as a trail-blazer in futures work regarding societal decision-making, even in the international arena. Indeed, it is natural for this committee to be where the future prospects for societal development and democracy are discussed.

The future of societal decision-making has received less attention in systematic futures research than the development prospects for economy and technology. The subject is a demanding and multifaceted one. When I participated for the first time in a world conference on futures research in Stockholm in 1982, the theme of the conference was *The Future of Politics*. Back then, in my report in the journal for members of the *Finnish Society for Futures Studies*, I wrote: "It was noted during the conference's concluding debate that no single set of conclusions had emerged from the work, but that opinions of the current state and future of the contemporary political decision-making system varied enormously. In the view of some participants, the party-based political system operating in most countries today, with its contingent problems of disaffected citizens, is undergoing a significant crisis, which societies will survive only as a consequence of significant change, perhaps brought about by popular movements ... In the view of other participants, there was no discernible crisis."

There is something topical about that quotation even today. On the other hand, the last quarter of a century has borne witness to surprising changes and quite new phenomena. Personal computers became widespread and then portable, mobile phones were invented and the Internet emerged. Socialism collapsed, the Baltic countries gained their independence and joined Nato. The Nokia phenomenon was born. Finland joined the European Union in 1995, even though it was still a taboo subject in politically correct debate in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, the token of an age-old love between two nations carved in stone, was replaced by EMU and other agreements. A new globalisation swamped the world, and there were many other surprising developments.

In a democratic society, the debate on the individual's relationship with decision-making which affects him is an eternal one in that each generation has to devise its own interpretation of democracy and come up with solutions concerning the future which are always provisional in nature.

The centenary celebrations of the Finnish Parliament provide the Committee for the Future with a wonderful opportunity to lay the foundations for a civil debate on the prospects for societal development in the future and on related issues and models of decision-making. This report aims to provide a stimulus for such a debate.

I would like to thank the Committee for the Future for this opportunity to engage in such reflections and for the fruitful cooperation throughout the whole project. Acknowledgements are also due to a large number of Finnish and international experts, who in different ways have made their views available to me. A list of these experts, the members of the steering group appointed by the Committee for the Future and the civil servants involved in the project is included as an annex.

Irrespective of the role that they have had in the project, some individuals have made such a significant contribution that I wish to make special mention of them: Wendell Bell, Olavi Borg, Jim Dator, Jerry Glenn, Jyrki J. J. Kasvi, Jaakko Kiander, Osmo Kuusi, Risto Linturi, Eleonora Masini, Alekski Neuvonen, Kalevi Olin and Paula Tiihonen.

Let it be noted that this report is a statement on the future as seen by its author, and the responsibility for its contents lies with its author and not, for example, with the members of the Committee for the Future or with the experts who have guided the author.

The future is always full of surprises, and the next future usually holds more surprises than the previous one. Instinct tells me that if this report is being read fifty years from now, it will be considered to have been too cautious and conservative in its assessment of the future.

Villa Minkki, October 2006

Mika Mannermaa

Contents

Introduction.....	9
What is at issue – the background and objectives.....	9
Democracy and the future – issues regarding the future of society and democracy in a nutshell.....	14
The kind of world the democracy of the future will be exercised in.....	23
Major waves of development.....	23
Globalisation’s strides towards diverging blocks or a multicultural global community.....	27
The new stages of the information society.....	37
A Finn goes grey in an urban centre and pluralises	53
Future prospects for society and democracy.....	62
Democracy is not perfect – but it is improving.....	62
The fall in importance of representative democracy ...or the rise.....	69
The technology of the information society in societal influence.....	78
The scales of democracy – globalisation and localisation.....	91
The ideologisation of the future?.....	103
The arenas of democracy of the future	122
What if? -scenarios.....	122
Futures theses for democracy up to 2017.....	129
Futures theses for democracy after 2017 – 2057 ... 2107	134
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	140
Bibliography and links.....	153
Annex: Experts and steering group of Committee for the Future.....	161
Endnotes.....	163

Introduction

What is at issue – the background and objectives

Democracy = rule by the people (Greek: *demos* = people, *kratein* = to rule); democratically governed state; a political system, a system of government in which the will of the majority has decisive influence

Democrat = a supporter of democracy (Greek: *demokrates*)

Democratism = the idea that democracy is the best form of government

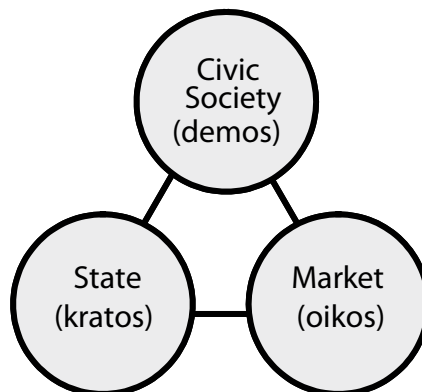
– dictionary definitions

Democracy (Greek: δημοκρατία) is a form of government in which decisions on policy are taken on the basis of the majority opinion in a decision-making process which is open to all or most citizens. Features of contemporary democracy are free, multi-party elections and universal and equal suffrage. Democracy is also used to describe association democracy and company democracy, in which a majority of the community concerned decides on matters regarding that community. A supporter of democracy may be termed a “democrat”

– Wikipedia: <http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demokratia>

Democracy as a concept is a Latin translation of the terms *demos*, *kratos* and *kratein* as used by Aristotle. *Demos* means area or people viewed collectively, while *kratos* means power and *kratein* government. Democracy in Ancient Greece was originally democracy of a direct kind. All the free men in the *demos* were also members of the “parliament”; they included a maximum of around ten percent of the population – women, slaves and foreigners (aliens) were excluded from the exercise of influence.

A third agent of societal influence, which has very much come to the fore in modern times, is the *oikos*, the market on which companies operate.ⁱ



ⁱ Greek *oikonomia*, household management; cf. economy and the economics. In Ancient Greek *oikos* originally stood for family, house, and household (incl. the slaves)

The modern concept of democracy has been interpreted as a product of the Enlightenment. According to Patrick Love, it is based on Emmanuel Kant's concept of autonomy, the roots of which are to be found in Ancient Greece. Autonomy is a law (*nomos*) which someone lays down for himself (Greek: *autos* = self). In other words, "rule of the people by the people for the people".¹ Often the word *nation* is used instead of *people*.

The author of this report understands the core concept of democracy in the same way as Professor of Political Science Jim Dator: *democracy is a form of governance which provides every person who is affected by the actions of an independent entity with the possibility to influence those actions constantly and with equal opportunities*.² The concept of democracy has to be understood more widely than in the sense of mere formal societal governance. In order for a society to be democratic, the ideals of democracy have to extend to all processes that have an influence on a person. In addition to representative societal decision-making, key components are economic democracy, the individual's right to influence inter alia his working conditions (company democracy) and, on the other hand, to act as an active consumer (client democracy). The application of democratic ideals in other such important arenas as religious and ideological groups, organisations, universities, schools and even in families is part of the broad interpretation of democracy. The formal societal processes of democracy function well and credibly only when the principles of democracy have been instilled from childhood and are applied in all areas of life. Applying them means different things in different areas. For example, a democratic debate can be held on the consequences of scientific findings for society, but the scientific process in itself is not democratic.³

This report is not a treatise on political science, nor does it examine in any depth different interpretations of the concept of democracy, its historical development or even its current state in any comparative empirical sense. The author of the report is a futures researcher and the focus of the report is on the future: what in essence can be said about democracy and the future on the basis of present-day megatrends in society, economy and technology and other developmental phenomena and in assessing the possibilities for the future. *In assessing democracy and future prospects in politics, the author is of the view that it is not enough to examine only democracy and politics.*

It may be stated right from the outset that the *demos* in the future will probably not be the same as in the past or even in the present. The *demos* is traditionally associated first and foremost with *nationality* or *people* (the Finns), which in exercising autonomous power in a given territory (the geographical area of Finland) at the same time exercises *democracy*. Even though this concept may prevail for a long time to come, the future will probably turn out to be considerably more complex than the present:

1. In the future a group of people which functions autonomously in respect of a common feature, a *demos*, may be a *tribe* of a minoritising information society comprising people united by, for example, a lifestyle, profession, culture or hobby. These tribes may be wholly or partly virtual, and they will form a complex systemic whole (for example, one person may belong to many tribes). The tribes may demand and protect their autonomy, for which new ways of exercising democracy, "a democracy of minorities", will be developed.

2. The idea of democracy has historically been applied by extension to different dimensions of human activity – for example, company democracy, client democracy and school and university democracy have been developed – and that may well also happen in the future. On the other hand, a need will emerge to identify areas where democracy is definitely a bad model of governance – for instance, referendums should not be organised about the accuracy of scientific findings.
3. In the long term, the *demos* may also constitute a larger group than in the past; a genuine *European* or even *global identity* may emerge. While a global perspective in the light of the events at the beginning of the new millennium may seem difficult and naive in political, cultural and economic terms, such a perspective will be highly probable, if not a necessity, in the long term.
4. The development of globalisation will generate its own *models of democracy*; a European democratic community and democratic world governance in strategic issues of global proportions – how we relate to the environment, global ground rules for economy and other interactions – may be as natural in 2107 as the Parliament in Finland in 2007. There are good grounds for hoping that development in that direction will come about a great deal more quickly. It would be extremely worrying for humanity and for the globe if we had to wait another 100 years for a functioning global democracy.
5. Demoi as *small tribes* or *large supranational communities* are not mutually exclusive future development phenomena, but can come about simultaneously and complement one another – the systemic whole of societal systems and then democracies is growing, diversifying and becoming more complex. Globalisation and localisation developments are generating a *glocalisation development*.
6. Correspondingly, it may be considered that the *place-bound communities* representing locality in the traditional sense and the new *non place-bound virtual tribes* will in principle be able to coexist in perfect harmony in the future, and a new kind of exercise of power – democratic and other – will emerge within and between them. Conflicts are also possible, and have already been witnessed, such as the virtual tribe Greenpeace versus the French state or the corresponding constellation of al-Qaeda versus the United States. In the future, it is possible that tribes or “nations” operating in virtual networks will engage in a global struggle with one another.⁴
7. In the very long term, it is possible that the majority of human activity, measured according to use of time and economic indicators, will be virtual, whereupon *almost all societal influence and decision-making will shift to a virtual space*, be it democratic or not. The jacaranda chairs of the Finnish parliament may be taken out of use long before 2107.

8. There are countries and regions in the world where the key issues surrounding the nature of democracy and the demos are not those which are described above. Many African countries, most of Asia (including China) and the Arab world are not even striving to be democracies in the sense that democratic ideals are usually understood.
9. Even though the number of states applying a democratic model in one way or another and the number of people living in such states have increased in recent times, *it would be naive to think that the future will be a triumphal march for democracy* in which one dictatorship after another will come crashing down. There are powerful global trends in culture and society and resistance to change which are heading towards models of governance of a different kind from democracy, even when the concept is interpreted loosely.
10. Furthermore, the western model of democracy will face considerable challenges in the future, even in traditionally democratic societies. The reason for this is the general societal development *from industrial nation state to globalising information society* and at the same time *the more complex nature* of technological, economic and societal phenomena and the *increasing pace* of change.

This report is a dialogue on the future drafted for the Committee for the Future and its general objective is to evaluate the development prospects, challenges and opportunities for democratic influence and decision-making in the society and the world of the future in the long and supra-long term.

The specific objectives of the report are:

1. To present a succinct futures analysis of *the kind of world* in which democracy will be exercised in the future; of the *major waves* of development (industrial society, the phases of the information society and beyond); the key *megatrends* (society, technology, economy, global issues and democracy) as well as the *specific features* of Finnish society.
2. To present assessments of how the prospects for societal development will impact on the *key principles of democracy*; on the arenas of democracy – globalisation and localisation, the possibility of a global democracy – representative democracy and other forms of influence, the new technologies of the information society in exercising societal influence, popular movements and new tribes in the exercise of representative and direct influence, and new ideologies and applications of democracy.
3. To set out a number of “*what if*” scenarios regarding the future and theses on the *development prospects for democracy* in the long (as far as 2017) and supra-long (from 2017 as far as 2107) term.

4. To draw *conclusions* and make *proposals* to the Committee for the Future on how to promote democracy in the future.

Two time spans were defined for the study: *the long term as far as 2017* (main focus) and *the supra-long term as far as 2107* (brief outline). In 2017 Finland will celebrate the centenary of its independence, and this date is a fitting one in terms of the typical assessment period for futures research that it provides. In 2107 the bicentenary of the first plenary session of the Finnish parliament in its current form will be marked. The supra-long term, a hundred years, offers a large degree of freedom for reflecting on the possibilities the future may hold.

The theme of *Democracy and Futures* was on the agenda of the “*Futures Generation for Future Generation*” world congress of the World Futures Studies Federation in Budapest in 2005.⁵ The theme was further developed in October that year at a workshop of European futures researchers in Prague (“*Designing the Future in Europe ‘05*”). Furthermore, a group of international futures researchers commented on the theme of *Democracy and Futures* via an e-survey in spring 2005 and in the following autumn assessed a fairly extensive article by the author of this report entitled “*Democracy and Futures. Some questions for the New Millennium*”.⁶ The theme of *Democracy and Futures* also featured at the World Future Society conference in Toronto in July 2006, when the author of this report delivered a paper on the subject and then chaired a session on the same theme.⁷ A list of the experts than participated in their own ways to the debates is annexed to this report

Associated with this report is an international collection of articles “*Democracy and Futures*”, in which a number of well-known futures researchers from around the world were invited to share their own views of the future of democracy. The collection was co-edited by the author of this report, Professor Jim Dator and Committee Counsel Paula Tiihonen and was published in July 2006⁸. The Finnish translation of the articles “*Demokratia ja tulevaisuudet*” was published in December 2006.

It is worth explaining to the reader the logic behind the report and the structure that it follows. The report is divided into five chapters:

1. The *Introduction* sets out the objectives of the report and describes in summary form the key issues surrounding society and democracy in the future.
2. In the chapter entitled *The kind of world the democracy of the future will be exercised in*, a frame of reference is constructed to enable democracy issues for the future to be examined. This chapter addresses the major waves of development and the future prospects for society, economy and technology both in general and from a specifically Finnish angle. Such an examination is indispensable if the logic and future perspectives for the development of society are to be understood.
3. In the chapter entitled *Future perspectives for society and democracy*, an evaluation is to be found of development prospects for democracy, scales of societal

influence, the development of representative and other forms of influence, the importance of new technology in defining the societal agenda, civil debate, elections and decision-making, and the importance of ideologies in the future.

4. *Arenas of democracy in the future* is a chapter in which, on the basis of the above, theses are presented regarding phenomena most crucially associated with the future of democracy in the long (as far as around 2017) and supra-long (for decades to come, even as far as 2107) term. The chapter also presents three possible scenarios, the purpose of which is to remind the reader that societal development can proceed along very different paths in as little as a few decades.
5. The chapter entitled *Conclusions and recommendations* contains the author's conclusions and suggestions for promoting democracy in the future.

A tip for the reader: it is worth reading the report in full. However, busy readers and those familiar with the futures debate may examine the chapter dealing with general societal development in the future *The kind of world the democracy of the future will be exercised in* selectively and concentrate on the sections that follow.

Democracy and the future – issues regarding the future of society and democracy in a nutshell

A number of issues surrounding the theme of democracy and the future emerge from literature and international debate, and they are described briefly below. These future themes for democracy and the conclusions which can be drawn from them are assessed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

When looking at democracy and the future, the following subject areas at least have to be discussed:

1. ***There are many features of the prevailing political system and culture in western democracies that are almost opposed to modern futures thinking and the basic point of departure for futures research.*** There are a growing number of issues which should be reflected upon from *a long-term perspective*, at least decades from now; *in politics, however, the short-term perspective predominates*. The parliamentary cycle in Finland is four years, the budget cycle one year, and people's political memory, which often guides societal action, stretches back only a few months.

The future should be considered *in multisectoral and systemic terms*, while politics (and governance) are often marked by a sectoral ("not my job") mindset: "The municipal affairs minister takes care of the municipalities, the justice minister of drafting legislation, the culture minister of culture." Society is *truly complex* and gaining a full grasp of issues is a demanding task. There is an in-built logic in politics which involves *simplifying*, and there is a great temptation for members of parliament to sell *easy solutions* to citizens. Often citizens

also press for such solutions, taking it for granted that a “one fell swoop” solution exists for one problem after another.⁹

The futures debate is characterised by the concept of *change*, usually *ever faster change, emerging issues and unpredictable* surprises. In politics there often appears to be a strong desire to rely on unchanging predictabilities and trends, to maintain the *status quo* and to *hang on to currently held positions*.

A genuine futures debate requires *competing visions, dreams*, which generate discussion of values. In theory, in voting for party X, a person is choosing the vision of the future offered by that party. Visions are based on ideologies, ideologies on values. Parties stand out from one another precisely by offering competing visions of the future. In theory that is. The modern information society has covered up old party ideologies within it but has not generated any new ones. Many citizens vote for someone that they know from television and have not the faintest idea of that person’s views on society.

The modern futures mindset urges *proactive behaviour* – the future is there to be made; in other words, futures analysis of the factors for change in the operating environment and inspiring visions form a basis for strategies for taking a grasp of the future. Political activity is marked by *passivity and opportunism* – the future is there to be drifted into; inspiring, ideological visions of the future (Salla, Finland, Europe, the world) are not to be found. *Strategic thinking in politics is almost impossible*.¹⁰

The need to assess different development phenomena and their consequences for the future in the very long term is growing all the time, and at the same time it is becoming ever more difficult to analyse the future. There are many reasons for this, of which here are just two examples. The first is the accelerating and more complex nature of change with its “counter-intuitive” consequences. “Development is developing” said a former parliamentarian, and he was usually right. Things will not necessarily be that way in the future, because when significant societal and economic decisions are made, all their combined effects may not be obvious, and may even be the opposite of what was intended. Systematic assessment of the future is needed so as to bring even a reasonable degree of governability to democratic development – despite that the future always has surprises in store.

The second reason for a carefully considered futures perspective is simple: humanity’s societal, economic and technological ability to exert influence through its own decisions – sound and less sound – on both the natural world and its own societies is greater than ever. Because decisions are powerful and have long-lasting, if not fatal effects, it is reasonable for them to have to be based on conscious consideration of the future. *The current generation has a responsibility through the decisions that they take towards future generations. This responsibility is great and concrete on an unprecedented scale.*

Introducing an element of systematic futures thinking into the everyday life of a western democracy is more than just a challenge. In terms of the ecological sustainability of development, it is an outright necessity. On the other hand, it is also a positive opportunity to take sound decisions in the present, the long-term consequences of which are at least on occasions what was intended.

2. What are **the geographical arenas in which democracy will function in the future?** The industrial age and (nation) state-level sovereignty go hand in hand. Will the future leave both of them behind? In the globalising age of information societies, a broader concept of the potential spatial dimension of democracy is emerging. This may mean that the (nation) state level loses its power, the supranational regional levels (the European Union and others) are reinforced and the debate on *democratic world governance* will gain momentum and credibility.

There may be a long wait for elections to *the world parliament*, but world governance can be implemented by reforming and reinforcing the UN and by increasing democratic legitimacy within other existing global players, such as the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Furthermore, democratic world governance can be promoted by producing ever more binding global agreements on inter alia essential natural resources, the state of the environment and the treatment of workers, and by enforcing compliance with them in an increasingly transparent and effective manner.

As the relative importance of the state level declines, the regional and local levels may be given additional freedom of action. *The local will gain in power alongside the supranational and the global* – one can talk about *the development of glocalisation*. In the Finnish context, the level gaining in power will perhaps be the economic areas, not the municipalities or the regions. The provinces may well disappear as historical relics.

3. One of the main issues regarding democracy in the future is **the relationship between representative and direct democracy**. The representative ways of implementing democracy – parliament, councils, boards, committees, commissions – are slow to embrace fast technological, economic and societal processes. In futures assessments it has long been felt that the exercise of influence through instruments of direct democracy will increase – civil society organisations, citizens' referendums, third sector, the use of Internet power, market forces, etc.

Exercise of influence directly by the people is intrinsically part of true civil society. However, it is not without its problems. For example, it may be asked if the direct exercise of influence in the form of *referendums*, which in the future will be technically possible to organise every day on a different subject, constitutes a maximisation of democracy or its over-simplification or at worst a tyranny by the majority against minorities. One of the positive aspects of repre-

sentative democracy is that representatives are required to familiarise themselves with and carefully consider issues before taking a decision, and this can be made extremely transparent in an open society.

Societal issues are becoming more complex all the time. Forcing them into the “yes”, “no”, “don’t know” mould suitable for referendums may grossly distort reality. The results in that case would be such that a lottery would be as accurate a way of “sounding out the nation” as a referendum.

New information and communications technology provides brand-new possibilities for reinforcing *civil society* and the direct influence that takes place within it. Technology promotes citizens’ interaction with and influence upon different areas of policy over and above voting. The possibilities afforded by new technology include citizens’ petitions on legislation, electronic town meetings and voting as well as electronically enabled policy dialogues. It is also considerably easier for citizens to stay in touch with the members of parliament.¹¹

The Internet is already a real instrument of power. The younger generation in particular spend hours on line each day, which undoubtedly influences their lives, the way they think and their behaviour in society. Local and global popular movements are using the virtual world on a routine basis and to greater effect in bringing influence to bear. In terms of speed, the Internet is currently the supreme instrument for civil campaigning.

4. One major societal trend has long been the development away *from a society of majorities to a society of minorities*. There is no longer a “large majority” which in some general and positive manner would reflect “the Finnish view” and would express the view reasonably correctly in referendums, for example. The great social classes of the days of agrarian and industrial societies have been fragmenting into specialised professional groups and into small and changing tribes, and the cultural, ethnic, religious, etc spectrum is extending all the time.

This raises many issues that touch on democracy. For example, what is a “democratic majority decision” in the absence of a majority? Should a new societal mindset be learnt for the future: *society is surely plural*? Laws and agreements are developed over time in such a way as to enable radically different societal solutions within the same society. If special attention is not paid to the consequences of the development towards minoritisation, the risk is that *ad hoc* majorities will start to oppress minorities with majority decisions.

5. In the very near future, the use of new information and communication technology in voting will be a topical issue. The use of *on-line voting* in the Estonian parliamentary elections and the Swiss local elections in 2005 was just the beginning. There has been needless stalling on this issue in Finland, an advanced nation in IT terms. Online voting, perhaps first at supervised polling

stations – a trial is planned in three municipalities for the Finnish municipal elections in 2008 – but before long from a personal computer or PDA (“personal digital assistant”) will be a reality in Finland as well, probably in the near future.¹²

In the future, people will commonly express their views on society, including voting in elections, via a portable communications device, regardless of where they are – drinking a latte in the heart of Helsinki or fishing for salmon in Lapland. However, online voting and voting by mobile phone are just a fraction of the possibilities, the beginning of the development of a future *virtual democracy*.

6. ***Virtual democracy*** in the longer term future will involve a great deal more than virtual voting in elections. In a virtual democracy, people will influence how the agenda of societal decision-making bodies is defined or will participate directly in decision-making.

Virtual democracy may in the future radically affect what was said above about geographical arenas of activity. Ever more intelligent information and communication technology will also contribute to a decline in the importance of the traditional national and other geographical boundaries and operational levels (arenas) in exerting societal influence: *there are no geographical boundaries in virtual space and the concept of time is also different*.

This is already a reality in many respects. The operations of major global economic players are being managed to an ever greater extent virtually; their “office hours” are round the clock. Correspondingly, global Internet gaming, for example, does not recognise geographical borders or time zones. It can be morning for one player, evening for another.

Societal institutions and political processes with their rituals will take longer but they will come about in due course. For instance, the idea of a virtual municipality may mean that in one issue the “idea of municipality” is extremely local, in another issue even global. At some stage, the question will be asked *how much sense it makes to differentiate between municipalities, states, the European Union and other geographically defined areas*.

Ideas about virtual democracy are just germinating and are provisional, in other words emerging issues, if even that. However, the importance of virtual democracy in the future will probably be extremely great, and in the next few decades we may be surprised by how quickly it comes about and by the forms it takes.

7. ***Expertise, the society of risk and democracy***. Modern society at the beginning of the 21st century is more complex and faster changing *expert society* that at any earlier phase of society in the history of mankind. In the future, the trend towards ever more sophisticated forms of expertise will continue. The division

of labour will be increasingly refined, branches and professions more specialised, know-how will transform into specialised know-how, fields of sciences into specialised fields – for example, a leading researcher in one branch of biology will not necessarily know what results another leading biologist has just come up with, because they are operating in different specialised areas; people have to confine themselves to a narrow area in order to be leaders in their field. The required level of qualification is rising in other areas too, not just in the sciences. A cleaner is now a technologically equipped professional.

When societal, economic and technological systems become more complex, the *material and virtual risks* inherent to them increase. There is a need for special expertise and systemic overall understanding, *systems intelligence*.¹³ *The society of risk goes hand in hand with the society of trust.*

A major challenge for the future is to develop democratic methods which will allow for the combination of meritocratic expertise and the “value expertise” of the people, which they express through parties and societal movements, and to do so in a way in which societal decisions and actions reflect people’s values and the experts stay in their role. A cliché, but one which is relevant here: the dog should wag the tail, not the reverse. However, the tail should not be docked as experts are indispensable in contemporary society.

8. An issue intrinsically linked to democracy, and to which little attention has been paid, is the fact that the modern information society is developing into a **“Some Brother is controlling, knowing and never forgetting”** society. In a variety of ways, an increasing volume of ever more accurate data and traces are being left behind by people. The mobile phone can tell where we are at any point in time, our Internet habits can be traced and there are surveillance cameras everywhere. For example, a motorist will soon have to think that if he exceeds the speed limit, the risk of being caught is not slight but certain. The health centre knows if grandmother has woken up this morning, if her heart is still beating and if she has remembered to take her medication. We are living an *aquarium life*.

There is more information than ever before on society, economy and about citizens in countless information systems. Our accumulated health records have been held in storage over the years. For instance, a high-street store has an ever clearer picture of our profile as consumers. In addition to all the highly personal data already subject to privacy protection, a new and significant set of data will be provided by ever more accurate *genetic* data on each of us. The so-called *ubiquitous society* (“intelligence is ever-present”) is reinforcing this development.

The society of the future will monitor everything and know everything; what is more, it will never forget. Throughout a person’s life, things happen that he would rather forget. Even today and more so in the future, a person will leave so many traces of himself that his whole life will be able to be *reconstructed*

very accurately, and it will be possible to use the information for many purposes. A few decades ago, a person could have moved to a different place if he had so wished and have started a new life from scratch. That will not be possible in the future.

Let it be stressed here that what has been described above and a great deal more happens for the most part with the best of intentions. Deliberately destructive and criminal attempts to exploit new information and communication technology are a separate issue. These phenomena will have significant societal effects. *A major challenge for democracy will be to define again and again what the ground rules are that govern monitoring, knowing and not forgetting.* As technological development is not showing any signs of stopping, this will be a never-ending ethical and societal debate – and it will generate decisions, which are always provisional.

9. A specific issue facing Finnish society in the next 10 to 30 years is how *the ageing of the population structure* will impact on democracy. The baby boom generation will retire, grow old, vote actively and they associate democracy with *being represented*. After them will come Generation X and younger generations, who may focus on other *means of exercising influence*. Democracy has to be able to adapt relatively quickly to all kinds of views of how people act in society, how decisions are taken and how self-evident it is (or is not) to exploit the latest technology when exercising societal influence.

One issue for society is whether this generational constellation will also create *tension*: how will the younger generations relate in the future to the baby boom generation who, after a moment of rebellion, became conservative, arranged cushy jobs for life and comfortable retirements for themselves and left the young to the misery of short-term contracts? The baby boom generation uses representative democracy actively, but younger people have at their disposal other means of exercising democracy, economic power and technological know-how. We may end up in situations in which a grey parliament dominated by baby boomers makes decisions in its own interest. Whether or not decisions will be complied with is another matter. Another scenario is that the multigenerational reality will bring about a tolerant democratic decision-making culture enriched by difference and a “society for all” mindset. After about 2030 the generational make-up of society will change again.

10. *Ending the political delay*. Modern society has *the technology and economy of the information society, but a union-like party-political map and a political culture that were born of agrarian and industrial society*. Back then, this emerged from the intrinsic tension of, for instance, fighting the cause of the peasantry and the tension between work and capital. The last significant political movement of the western industrial age to have become a party is the greens, who can be seen as the product of the tension between industrial society and the environment. *New parties of the agrarian-industrial era can no longer come about as we are now living in the age of the information society*. New societal

movements will be born of the tension within the globalising information society, but they will not become mass parties, since masses (majorities) no longer exist. The party-political map in 2057 will scarcely resemble that of today. Whether that will still be of any significance by then is an interesting question. However, it is clear that at some stage the *political delay will end*: political players born in a quite different time cannot lead the globalising information society and world for ever. We have learnt “new age – new companies” (there was no mighty Microsoft in the industrial society of the 1960s), but the “new age – old parties” mindset is still to be found. Societal changes occur with a time lag compared to rapid technological and economic changes, but they do occur in due course.

11. ***New ideologies?*** Contrary to what Francis Fukuyama claimed around 15 years ago, *the history of ideologies is scarcely over*.¹⁴ Fukuyama’s idea was that when, in the evolutionary battle between two great ideological systems, socialism (communism) and the western liberal market economy system, one won and the other lost, only the more viable winner lives on. This has been shown to be an over-simplification.

It is also illusory to imagine that *the increased information from the information society* will somehow automatically signal an end to conflicts of values and interests between people (“differences of opinion will disappear if only we have more information on the subject”). The new groupings of people (tribes) of the information society and the tensions between them can generate new ideological structures and, on the other hand, retroversions of old ideologies may be back on the agenda. Possible drivers of the future may be neo-Marxism, neo-liberalism, religious or other fundamentalism, the shift from linear thinking to systems thinking as an ideology, or meritocracy (“let the experts lead, they do it anyway”). Further possibilities are transhumanism (“all technological means of improving a person are acceptable”), Potterism (“living in a fairy tale”), cyberism (“only the virtual is real”) and “designer human” ideologies (for example, genetically different people have to be developed to meet the needs of science, sport, entertainment, etc”). The hedonistic McDonalds ideology (“life = consuming and shopping”) is already going strong, and in the future questions will be raised about the rights of intelligent robots; a freedom movement for intelligence-enhanced gorillas may spring up and Global brain or Jedi ideology may emerge as the ultimate winner (“running the world is the stuff of heroes”). These issues are likely to be full of surprises in the future.

12. ***Meeting of cultures.*** Cultures meet ever more often and in more concrete ways. Strange realities are forced to ask themselves and each other if they can get along with each other. The western concept of democracy and its seamlessly integrated human rights and freedom of speech will be put to the test many times to come. Globalisation processes at their best offer better opportunities for learning from different cultures and living peacefully in a multicultural world community. Naturally, tension and conflict between cultures will also be possible in the future. Poverty and global inequality, ignorance, fanaticism and

the whipping up of religious or secular hatred will bring intercultural relations to a head and will create a prime breeding ground for terrorism. The cultural flare-ups seen within western societies in recent years (for example, in France) have unfortunately challenged the old idea that the more tangible and intangible interaction people have with each other – meeting day-to-day, economic, scientific and cultural exchange, tourism, surfing the net, the better they are at achieving mutual understanding and respect towards other cultures.

The alternatives to efforts to create a peaceful, multicultural world are, however, undesirable or constitute clear threats. Achieving real civil society and civil world in the future is possible, but it is a learning process for all cultures with no guarantee of a positive outcome.

The kind of world the democracy of the future will be exercised in

The next chapter will examine some of the most important change phenomena in societal development. These may be termed megaphenomena or megatrends. By megatrend is meant a phenomenon or phenomena which can be seen to have a general, and on the basis of development already undergone, recognisable direction and which it is believed will continue to move in the same direction in the future as well. The description of the major waves of development at the beginning functions as a theoretical framework of reference which will assist in structuring other societal phenomena and in assessing their significance.

Major waves of development

Throughout the era of the information society and the biosociety and beyond, we are moving (in the view of the American Academy of Science in 2003) towards a society of convergent technologies ... nanotechnologies will be in a leading position Significant ethical and legal issues will arise.

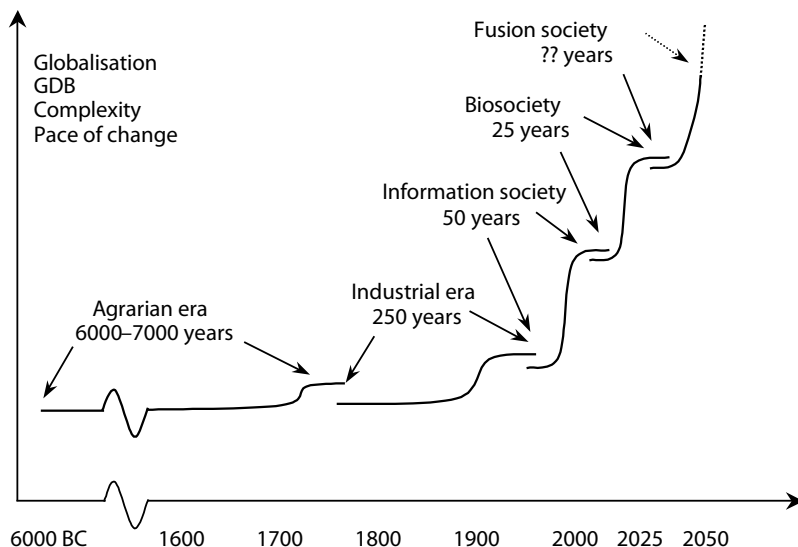
– Eleonora Masini 2005

The course of world history can be seen as the gradual spread of tribal morality into larger and more complex societies; the dawn of globalisation constitutes the climax of that development to date. Ever richer plus-sum games lure with ever improving value added, competitiveness, standard of living and toolbox for the exercise of power. But everything has its price. The ground rules proliferate and become more complicated, bureaucracy spreads and the monitoring intensifies, which creates new problems. Who monitors the monitors; who punishes those in power? The threat of collapse is always lurking in the depths of human nature.¹⁵

– Gustav von Herten 2004

All societal futures studies should include some kind of *framework of reference* with which to present assessments of the future. The evolutionary view of development has been adopted for this study and is briefly described next.¹⁶

The evolutionary view of the major waves of development



The terms used in this description to refer to the major waves of change are based on the prevailing or characteristic *technology* or *means of production* of the day. An extremely concise outline of each phase now follows.¹⁷

Agrarian society was based on primitive technology which enabled people to meet their basic needs, such as for food, shelter, clothing, and to attend to issues of community interest within the village context. More advanced industrial technology was in use in *industrial society*. This made it possible to mass-produce a great many physical commodities that did not exist in agricultural society, and thus it was also possible to satisfy the new needs of physical mass consumption as well. Industrial society displayed the essential features of agrarian society, but a great deal more besides. One new feature of it in particular was the introduction of inorganic natural resources, such as ores, oil and coal, and their industrial exploitation in numerous societal functions.

As for the *information society*¹⁸, which is characterised by information and communication technology, this is a stage which incorporates the demands and technologies of agrarian and industrial society, but a great deal more still, such as more intelligent technological solutions for meeting old needs and especially technologies focusing on the field of information and entertainment. With these technologies people can satisfy their non-physical needs in increasingly varied manners. The technologies of the information society include mobile phones, the Internet, multimedia devices, DVD, digital TV and MP3 players. The information society can be divided up into at least two sub-phases, the *technology-oriented* stage and the *content-oriented* stage, of which the latter is well underway in a technologically developed society such as Finland.

A possible subsequent wave of technology – the cluster of bio-, material and nanotechnologies – and the features that it gives rise to in society, which can perhaps be called the *biosociety*, may contain all that has been described above. For one thing, it will be cleverer than the society of today. Furthermore, it will have at its disposal constantly developing new technologies that will enable the treatment of organic nature – plants and animals, including humans. Gene therapies, other forms of genetic modifi-

cation and other characteristics of biosociety will again bring new features to societal evolution.

In the phase of biosociety, man thus controls the satisfaction of his basic needs, the processing and even creation of material, the extremely efficient processing of information and entertainment in the virtual space and far-reaching transformation of biological life. The technological future in the very long term, *the fusion society*, may mean that the development towards convergence which is already discernible in information and communication technology – for example, instead of a separate digital camera and mobile phone, the same device has both features – will later act as a more general development in the fusion of technologies. Machines contain living components, (while) living creatures contain different mechanical implants. In the fusion society, there will be no specific agricultural technology, industrial, information, bio- or any other specialised technology. There will just be technology, applied in different combinations of all the aforementioned, and possibly including things which as yet are not even imaginable, combined in ways appropriate for each use (fusions).

The diagram shows that the *pace of change has accelerated*, and each new wave has been more short-lived than its predecessor. From a technologically relatively stable agrarian society phase, which lasted thousands of years, there was a shift to an industrial phase that lasted for only hundreds of years. The information society phase which we are currently living through will perhaps last only decades. Subsequent phases may be even more short-lived. There is no guarantee that the pace of change will further accelerate in the future, but nor are there any signs of the reverse happening.

The vertical axis of the diagram is marked with globalisation, gross national product, complexity and pace of change. There could be additional items too, such as urbanisation, the advance of which is a worldwide and Finnish phenomenon. These will be *strong tendencies in the future too*, although there is not yet cause to talk of any resemblance to the laws of nature.¹⁹

The idea of waves of societal development contains within it the important notion of *emergence*:²⁰ a new stage of society generates wholly new emergent technological, economic and societal phenomena. For example, the *Microsoft* and *Nokia* of the modern information society operate in fields that did not even exist in the industrial society of the 1960s. On the other hand, it is important to note that the information society of our era displays all the key features of industrial society. There is at least as much manufacture of goods to satisfy material needs now as there was during the industrial society proper. At the same time, the information society is also an agricultural society. We do not eat information or TV quiz shows but food, and more and better food than during the agrarian society phase.

The new phase has a tendency to make its predecessor resemble it: industrial society “industrialised” agriculture, the information society is making heavy industry more intelligent, is “informatilising” industry, to borrow Manuel Castells’ terms.²¹

The prevailing technological and production model has a tendency to expand “spatially” too: in the industrial society the public sector also took some of its structures and operating processes from the factory mindset. Municipal authorities, ministries, schools and hospitals are reminiscent of factories, as is the language: for example, there was talk of “learner material”, of people as a raw material from which a school factory produced a product of even quality, students.²² Currently, the information society is disseminating its technological and economic models outside of the economy as such

and throughout society. For instance, the debate about outsourcing, networking, speed and enhanced efficiency in the context of municipal services is an example of just that.

Our reflections of the futures can learn from this that the essential forms of need-fulfilment from each phase remain – for example, food and goods production – but in modern society organising the production of the earlier phases requires only a fraction of the resources that previously accounted for the majority of the work done in society. In 1903, 70 percent of the Finnish labour force worked in primary production, in 2003 only 5 percent.²³

In this framework of reference *the models of representative democracy* fit well into the industrial phase of development. The current model of representative democracy can be seen to reflect the features and overall nature of precisely industrial society. Simplifying slightly, in the industrial model society can be imagined as a large *set of machines* (cf. the factory). In the machinery there are parts that have their own functions. The task of representative decision-making bodies is to keep the machinery running by taking *majority decisions* (cf. industrial mass solutions). The decision-making machinery is *hierarchical*: for example, in a municipality, the council, administrative board and committees form a hierarchy, which is backed up by an equivalent hierarchy in the administrative machinery (cf. the hierarchical structures in a traditional industrial company). In addition, the decision-making machinery is hierarchical, and it is also *rigid, slow to change* and *sectoral*; its flows of information and influence run *vertically* from top to bottom and bottom to top (as a factory in the industrial era would work). In the model of representative democracy in industrial society, it has traditionally been thought that *democracy is maximised* when as many citizens as possible are involved in making decisions in *institutional bodies*, such as on some committee in their municipality. In administration, high positions in the hierarchies of institutions have meant power in society. In a traditional manufacturing company too, the key source of power has traditionally been a formal position. The strong position occupied by institutions is reflected by the fact that, if even a temporary committee was set up in industrial society, it was filled with representatives of institutions.

These characteristics of industrial thinking work badly in the information society. It is highly probable that, in the same way that the industrial age shaped technology, economy and everyday life as well as, for example, education and healthcare systems and the operation of democracy in its image, the same will happen in the information society. The democracy mindset and models of the information age are just finding their way, but it may already be speculated that watchwords will be *networks* instead of hierarchies and *flexible and rapid changes* instead of rigidity and slowness. *Multi-sectorality* and *systems thinking* will replace sectoral thinking, and *horizontality* will take the place of verticality. *Actual competence and creativity* will challenge *formal offices and positions*. The metaphor will be *organic brain* rather than *mechanical machinery*.

It is worth stressing one further point. The information society will follow different development paths, *scenarios*, as it becomes more elaborate in the future. For example, *the neo-liberal model of information society* is different from the development path based on *Nordic welfare thinking*. It is also fairly certain that the next “waves”, such as the still unformed and hypothetical but possible biosociety, could turn out to be very different on account of previous history and on the goals and limits set for human development – and as a product of coincidences. The same will apply to models of decision-making in future phase of society.

Globalisation's strides towards diverging blocks or a multicultural global community

Multi-speed globalisation

Globalisation has proceeded at different speeds in different areas. Science has always been universal; Finnish mathematics and American physics have not existed, only mathematics and physics. The globalisation of technology is well advanced, as is that of economy. Conversely, global systems of society have yet to be developed. The same applies to values and attitudes. It is possible to talk of a Kitee, North Carelian and Finnish identity, but with less conviction about a European identity and barely at all about a global identity. Supranational societal systems (the European Union, NAFTA and the similar) are just developing and the world governance that they display is weak.

The oft-quoted Petrella²⁴ sketches out the *component phenomena* that globalisation usually encompasses as follows:

- *Globalisation of capital and financial markets*: deregulation of money markets, international capital movements and company take-overs.
- *Globalisation of markets and competition strategies*: the worldwide integration of business, global networks of companies and strategic alliances.
- *Globalisation of technology, research and development work, and information acquisition*: the development of information technology and global networks.
- *Globalisation of lifestyles and consumer habits*: uniformisation of ways of life and consumer behaviour; influences of the media; “culture industry” and “culture commodities” and their regulation in international trade.
- *New instruments of regulation and governance*: the changing duties of national parliaments and governments; the emergence and development of new global and regional instruments of governance; new forms of political unification.
- *Globalisation of thought, methods of observation and awareness*: social and cultural processes, “one shared world”; global sub-cultures and movements; citizenship of the world.
- *Globalisation of environmental problems*: climate change, ozone depletion in the stratosphere and the impoverishment of biodiversity.

There have been waves of globalisation before and the current one has been underway for decades. Globalisation is characterised by the historically natural and logical development of a new operational level higher even than the supranational, regional levels, such as the European Union. Current globalisation has been greatly assisted by the

rapid development of information and communication technology, which in turn has been given an essential boost by the globalisation process.

The geographical movement of production and production investments anywhere around the globe is easy nowadays. If *cheap labour* is needed to produce *Nike* trainers, for example, the production is exported to countries where such labour is available – including child labour. If the production has *detrimental effects on the environment*, it is transferred to regions where the legislation and societal conditions overall are so underdeveloped that no one is bothered about such effects. Nowadays, the component of globalisation referred to as the *China phenomenon* is a long-established development path. The accident that occurred at the poison gas factory owned by the *Union Carbide* company in Bhopal 20 years ago, in which thousands of people died, was already part of the so called China phenomenon, even though it took place in another region on the rise, India.

In 2003–2006 there has been a lively debate in Finland on the nature, threats and opportunities of the China phenomenon. Companies have transferred production – in more cases launched new production – outside Finland, for example, Elcoteq to Estonia and Hungary, Salcomp to China. 2006 saw repeated announcements in Finland of production sites for sub-contractors in the IT sector closing down and redundancy negotiations being launched (including Perlos, UPM, Elcoteq, Foxconn).

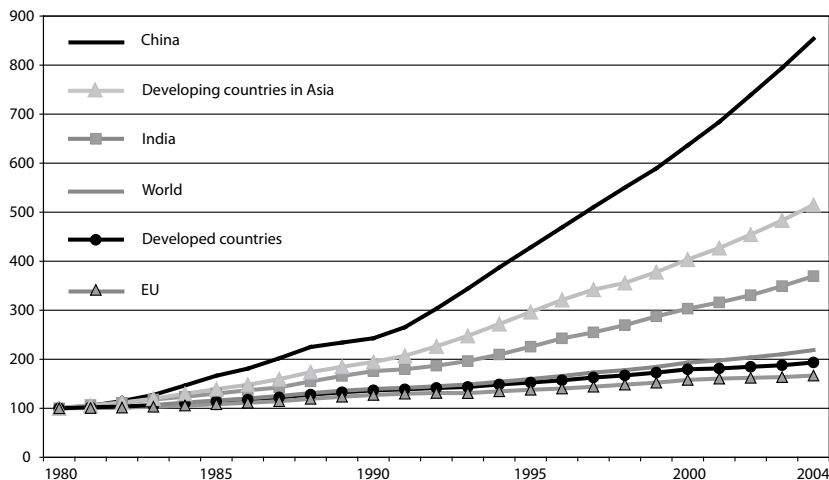
The so-called *Globalisation Strategy Task Force* of the Prime Minister's Office in Finland evaluated the key features of globalisation in the following manner:

- The major impact of globalisation is felt by developing countries. Developing countries have the opportunity to derive benefit in a new way from modern technology, wider markets and foreign capital. At the same time, these countries are subjected to the greatest pressure to adapt in economic, political and social terms as the mechanisms by which economy and society operate undergo major changes.
- Globalisation also affects developed countries in many ways. These effects concern the expansion of markets, increasing competition, and a new kind of organisation of production to form a worldwide network.
- The expansion of markets naturally increased the export potential of developed countries to rapidly growing developing countries. For example, imports to China have increased 20-fold in the last 20 years. For many developed countries, these developing countries have become a crucially import market area. For example, the recent revival of the Japanese economy can be ascribed to a large extent to the strong pull of the Chinese market.
- At the same time, production in developing countries is also providing ever stiffer competition to production in developed countries. The greatest competitive advantage that developing countries hold is cheap labour. Coupled with modern technology, an increasing level of education and know-how and improving infrastructures, low labour costs – often a fifth or even a tenth of the level of labour

costs in developed countries – make production in developing countries very competitive.

- The strong competitiveness of developing countries manifested itself at first in the channelling of growth in production of traditional industrial products to those countries. In some cases, this was accompanied by a simultaneous scaling-down of production in traditional industrialised countries. At first, this concerned mainly labour-intensive production requiring comparatively little specialisation, such as textile manufacture and cargo vessel construction. Later on, the transfer of industrial production has been seen in more demanding production, such as in the electronics industry.
- In almost all OECD countries industry's share of production and employment has been in constant decline for a long time now. As flows of investment and technology from one country to another have grown substantially since the mid-1990s, there have been significant changes in the regional distribution of production. As late as in the post-war period, Europe accounted for a third of world industrial production, but now that figure stands at no more than a good tenth. Conversely, the share attributable to East Asia (China, Japan, India) has risen from a tenth to a good third.
- A new and ever more prominent feature of the global economy is the internationalisation of services. The development of information and communication technology has contributed to a growing volume of services also being able to be provided in a different place from where they are consumed. In the United States and Great Britain in particular, the transfer of jobs to countries with lower levels of cost is affecting service sectors more and more.
- A key feature of globalisation is a new kind of worldwide organisation of production. Different stages of the production process can be carried out in different parts of the world. The design, marketing and "orchestration" of the production process are performed in one place, while the actual production and its different parts and the distribution are done in other places.²⁵ This carving-up of production exploits the relative advantages of different areas: in countries and regions with low wage-costs the part of production for which labour costs are of great importance is carried out, while the more demanding tasks are performed in regions with a high level of education and the marketing is done close to the market. An ever greater number of companies in developing countries are part of the global production networks of multinational companies. New means of production bind together the different parts of the world economy in a new and intensified way. For example, this is seen in the growth of cross-trading, i.e. international trade within the same branch. This development has accelerated in recent years.²⁶

GDP development in different countries and regions in 1980-2004, index 1980 = 100



Source: Etna

The graphic shows the speed at which different countries and regions have increased their gross domestic product over the last 25 years. China has a population of 1.3 billion, i.e. one inhabitant in every five on the globe is Chinese. China has a growing middle class that constitutes a huge market for different products and commodities. In many cases to date this market has been a more important reason for transferring production to China than cheap labour in itself.

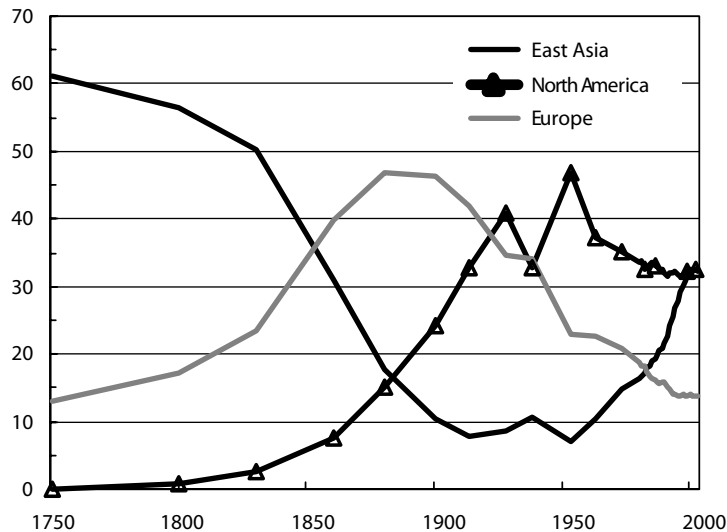
Chinese economist Jian-Guang Shen, who works at the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, has emphasised that China is basically a poor, predominantly agricultural country which is striving to reduce the development gap between itself and western countries in particular. This means industrialising the country, modernising the economy, the economy being exposed to globalisation and ultimately socio-political reforms.²⁷

It should be remembered that Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping launched a policy of openness as far back as the late 1970s.²⁸ According to Shen, China's development strategy is a two-phase one. In the first phase, it has been important to attract sizeable foreign investment and export-oriented industry to the country. That creates infrastructure and knowledge base for the second phase, which has already started and which focuses on the domestic market and on satisfying the needs of the middle class. The Chinese want education, better housing, domestic appliances, mobile phones, cars, opportunities to travel and other such things that are of interest to the middle class anywhere in the world. The Chinese domestic market is huge. The population of the EU, 450 million, seen as a proportion of the population of China is 35 %, while the corresponding figure for the United States (295 million inhabitants) is 23 % and for Finland (5.2 million inhabitants) is 0.4 %.

A commonly aired view at present is that the up and coming countries of the global economy are certain other Asian countries as well as China, in particular India, set to become the world's largest nation in terms of population over the next few decades,

Indonesia, Pakistan, South Korea and Taiwan, and, on the other hand, Brazil and Russia, which is the world's richest country in terms of natural resources. Of these, the rise of China when measured in terms of relative shares of GDP is already visible.

The distribution of industrial production in the world in 1750-2000 (%)



East Asia = China, Japan, India

North America = US, Canada

Europe = Germany, UK, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland

Sources: Bairoch (1982), Etla.

As can be seen from the diagram, the focal point of the global economy has shifted before and the distribution of labour is shifting once again, even though the North-American and European share of world GDP is still relatively high.

In the view of the *Governmental Forecasting Network* in Finland, globalisation will have the following kinds of political consequences:

- The political standing of economic regions in relation to each other will change as China and India grow in strength. The political significance of those joining economic areas and other regional organisations will heighten and, conversely, the United States will decline in status.
- The opportunities for developing countries to benefit from globalisation will vary. Those countries that have invested in education, knowledge and the information society, improving human rights and the position of women, will succeed. The attention of the international community will be needed by those nations that do not succeed.
- Should the European Union's capacity for decision-making and crisis management increase, the European Union's political role as a global player will grow.

- Control of energy resources is also a political and security issue. The strategic importance of availability of energy and its distribution routes will rise. The stability of producer regions will impact on the price and availability of energy. Energy resources will be used as an instrument for exerting political influence and pressure.
- Civil society and publicity will grow in importance.²⁹

Among the issues still to be resolved is how the future looks for the Nordic welfare state model in the face of these pressures. A key challenge for western countries, the United States and EU member states such as Finland is, on the one hand, *directing creativity and increased know-how into demanding tasks as well as increasing the degree of processing and productivity in all key areas of economy* and, on the other hand, *being involved right from the outset in new and rising clusters*.

In an information society like Finland, *knowledge-intensive industry* linked to infrastructure development, of which Nokia provides the best example to date, will also be a key component of the national economy. However, an ever growing part of future gross domestic product will be derived from knowledge and service activities with content characteristic of the second stage of the information society. Rising industries are *knowledge industries* and *knowledge services* in the pure sense, such as *research, education, consultancy, development of virtual industry, etc, e-commerce* and *other online activities* and the communication cluster in general. *Human services* (the *welfare cluster*, including *welfare technologies*) will also grow in importance. The *tourism industry* is a large and growing global cluster.

New opportunities will also be provided by the rise of the *biosociety* – bio-, nano- and fusion technologies – in the fields of “*life sciences*” (medicine), *food production* and *other modification of living nature* (genetically modified animal and plant food, the GM forestry cluster) and in *industrial processes*. The powerhouses of industrial society – *forestry, metal, energy, logistics, construction, foodstuffs* – may be reformed and made more efficient to cope with globalisation. Ecologically sustainable development, the *environment cluster*, will continue to be business in the near future. Channelling resources into science, research and development will also prepare us for playing a full part in wholly *new industries* which cannot yet even be clearly defined.

Global mega-issues and the necessity for democratic sustainable development

Disparities in development between different regions and countries of the globe as well as global and local environment problems are time bombs which will explode in different ways in the next few decades.³⁰ The climate change will make its presence felt even if emissions could be wiped out immediately. That will not happen, and environmental effects are unsustainable in the long term without radical societal changes. The climate is warming up with all the consequences that that entails, desertification is advancing, species are being destroyed and rain forests are being cut down due to the influence of giant companies and a corrupt ruling elite sympathetic towards them in so-called developing countries. Non-renewable resources, including oil, will run out in due course, and fresh water will become a scarce resource and even the reason for wars to be fought. Global material production and use of resources are growing and placing

a strain on the environment. In particular, the economic growth of so-called developing countries is material-intensive, and in many countries people operate with a total disregard for the environment.³¹ Local ecocatastrophes are to be expected.

Pandemics on a par with avian influenza will spread in a globalised world more and more easily. More of these are to be expected in the future.

The human rights situation has even deteriorated in places and wars are a source of entertainment on TV. After decades of development cooperation, the gap between the rich world and the poor has not narrowed. New threats have come to light, above all global terrorism and, on the other hand, excesses in the fight against it.

A requirement of ecologically sustainable development is that it has to be backed by the laws of nature: there can be no societies in the long term other than those that are in tune with ecologically sustainable development. There is a great need for considerably more convincing action on the part of official institutions (UN, governments, EU, etc) and for civil society action, as well as for events such as the Kyoto, Rio and Johannesburg Summits, if the planet is to be saved in the long term.

The latest version of the "*Limits of growth*" study points out that, in spite of positive efforts and achievements, humanity has already exceeded the capacity of the globe.³² The view of the writer of this report has long been that *effective solutions will be achieved only when democratic world governance has properly developed*. As for the timetable, it may be said, on the one hand, that we have run out of time if we wanted to preserve the planet from harm. On the other hand, the more we can save and the more quickly we can achieve a model of ecologically sustainable development, the more quickly and more effectively global, regional and local measures will proceed.

Major factors in the globalisation scenario are also cultural

Cultures meet:

*The Japanese will never make anything
that the Americans would want.*

– US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 1954

Globalisation is usually associated with economy and with technology. These are areas in which globalisation is advanced. However, globalisation is to an ever greater extent also a cultural challenge, and it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of this challenge for the future. Globalisation leads a meeting of cultures, and multiculturalism presupposes *cultural competence*, the minimum requirement for which can be considered to be a tolerance of difference. Fresh experience from 2006 of the outcry over the Mohammed cartoons shows how difficult it can be, even in the 21st century, for cultures to come together.

Francis Fukuyama originally published his famous article "*The End of History*" in the journal *National Interest* in 1989. He put forward the thesis that the ideological battle on evolution western market liberalism and communism ended in the collapse of real socialism. The former simply won, the latter lost, and in future all nations

would go down the development path of the west and would possibly adopt ever western values, ways of thinking, lifestyles and consumer patterns. Slightly later in 1993, Samuel Huntington from Harvard University, in his article “*The Clash of Civilizations*” in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, took a quite different view of the cultural future and stressed the important role of civilisations in carving out the world’s major development paths. He defined as civilisations Western Christianity, the Orthodox world, Islam, Confucianism (China), Japanese culture, Hindu culture, African culture and Latin American culture. In his view, an increase in tension between these civilisations is to be expected at the same time as coherence within them grows.

It is evident that a “*third road*” (and a fourth ...) also exists. *Both Fukuyama and Huntington focus on the major players and phenomena and pay virtually no attention to civil society and popular movements and, on the other hand, to virtual communities, which could be extremely important in the future.* The future is more than the logic of economy and institutional administrations (Fukuyama) or unchanging old civilisations (Huntington), rather the individual is constantly self-organising new phenomena as societal development takes place.

In 1993 the *World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF)* organised a world conference on futures studies on the subject of “*Coherence and Chaos in Our Uncommon Futures*”. The idea was to discuss whether in the future a coherent global value system (western? A Muslim culture? A new emerging global culture which is an amalgamation of earlier cultures?) will prevail, or whether the future will be characterised by a mosaic-like spectrum of value systems. No single shared view of the key trends has yet emerged, although most of the conference papers stressed the desirability of the future being culturally diverse.³³

For example, Professor Eleonora Masini, who has long been an influential figure in futures research, considered a multicultural future to be a continuation of a logical historic process, in which the importance of regions grows, but which is not marked by Huntington’s tension.³⁴ K. van de Veer, a long-standing Dutch multiculturalism researcher, considered that the idea of perfect multiculturalism in, for example, western society is just too optimistic, and that the opposite idea, that foreign cultures having to fully merge into the dominant culture in order for society to function, is in turn just too pessimistic.³⁵

It may be asked how much deeper the cultural change is that has come about together with a broadened cultural spectrum as a result of migration than just more ethnic restaurants springing up, different types of music being listened to, and society being nice and “colourful”. Have the basic values and norms of western societies changed as a consequence of multiculturalism? Will they ever be able to accept, for example, the honour killings and female genital mutilation that feature in Muslim cultures? (The circumcision of little boys is accepted in many countries, although it should be asked why this is so).

Consideration of how ready western culture is to confront other cultures is important, but in a global future an even more important issue is how other cultures, such as a growing Muslim culture, will tolerate others, including western cultures. *The multiculturalism debate is very much a western phenomenon at this point in time.* In Muslim countries, the debate on the enriching effect that different cultures can have on society is weak or forbidden. Those countries are not the destinations of migratory flows from other countries. The same applies to China and Japan of the Asian countries; they do

not receive significant flows of migrants from elsewhere. Nor are there migratory flows heading for Africa.

One way of assessing cultural development is to examine values. Repeated assessments (including in futures barometers) have indicated that some values in western culture will be reinforced: *ecological values, values that stress mental wellbeing and self-development, values that stress internationalism, and values that stress education and culture*. Material values in general and the relentless drive to increase one's material standard of living are included in the values which have often been considered to be losing their importance. Nevertheless, this may represent more a kind of civilised, utopian wishful thinking than a real development in the future. Materialism and consumerism are in good shape.³⁶

Since the 1970s, Ronald Inglehart has been carrying out broad, questionnaire-based surveys on values and their relationship with e.g. economic development. Based on material from the World Values Survey from 1995-1998, Inglehart and his colleagues have tried to draw a world values map. According to Inglehart et al., economic development would appear to have a powerful influence on cultural values: *the value systems of rich countries differ systematically from those of poor countries*. Economic development seems to steer all societies in the same direction irrespective of their cultural heritage. Separate cultural zones cling doggedly to existence two centuries after the start of the industrial revolution. The shift from an agrarian means of production to an industrial one seems to have been accompanied by a move from traditional values towards a growth in rationalism and secularism, but the traditional cultural influences persist.

In the western world, contrary to what certain other evaluations have shown, the United States is probably not the prototype of cultural modernisation that other societies follow. In the United States, much more traditional value systems prevail than in any other developed industrial/information society. According to Inglehart et al., *the Swedes, Dutch, Danish and Finns seem to be closer to the cutting edge of cultural change than the Americans*.³⁷

In the view of Inglehart et al., it looks as though industrialisation promotes the shift from traditional to secular-rational values; post-industrialisation³⁸ in turn promotes a change towards increasing trust, tolerance and greater welfare. However, this does not mean cultural convergence, but rather the development paths pursued by societies vary because of their different cultural traditions.³⁹

Primary global scenario of cultural pressures

The principal scenario in terms of global culture over the next few decades appears to consist of a worldwide struggle between cultural circles for economic and political power. In a nutshell, there will be a few key models and more bystanders. The *neo-liberal model* comes from the United States, of course, but it has supporters everywhere. Its basic premise is a strong faith in market forces as a solution to almost all human problems. Societal services as well as market commodities will have to be conditioned by the market. Taking care of a rich grandmother can naturally be a good business, and a neo-liberal can extend charity to the poor once he has got rich himself. The influential *New American Century* movement, a backstage player within the Bush ad-

ministration (other players with conservative values being the *American Enterprise Institute* and the *Heritage Foundation*), which has moved neo-liberalism in the direction of value conservatism and religious fundamentalism, a prominent role for the military and patriotic idealism: “It is in the interests of Americans and the whole world for Americans to run the whole world.”⁴⁰ In the great stress it places on patriotism and neo-conservatism, the American model is currently rather different from the pure neo-liberal model. It should be remembered that religion in the United States is a very private and pragmatic business, and there is no generally whipping up of hatred towards other cultures. Part of Christianity itself has been a “superculture” mentality, which has provided an entitlement to convert the “pagans of lower cultures” to the right faith in the form of centuries of mission work already and which is now entitling the Americans to “spread democracy” (= their own model of democracy) to other countries.

Crudely generalising, a second cluster of models is the *Asian* one. This model emphasises collectivism and endeavours to combine western technology and the market with centralised control. When Deng Xiaoping launched his policy of openness in the late 1970s, the Chinese leadership began to talk of a *socialist commodity economy*. The Chinese economy and use of resources has been experiencing strong growth for the last few decades. In Asian cultures (China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, etc), different though they are, the collectivity is put first at the expense of the individual, unlike in more individualistic western cultures. Under the communist dictatorship in China, the human rights of the individual are not respected and dissidents are put behind bars. Another rising Asian power, India, whose population is expected to overtake China’s before 2050, is a democratic state yet one where the old undemocratic caste system is still going strong. In addition to their societal systems, there is another major factor distinguishing China from India: age structure. China will age over the next few decades, India will not.

Other characteristics that typify Asian cultures include authoritarianism, nationalism, a prominent role for the military and a modest level of environmental awareness. Over the next hundred years, Asian cultures will exert significant influence in the global arena as a consequence of both their huge populations and their strong economic growth. Asia, excluding the Middle East, accounted for 56% of the world’s population in 2005.⁴¹

A third set of models is *European*. Even though we know that being European does not mean the same thing in Portugal, for example, as in the Nordic countries, on the global scale we are still relatively close to each other in our values and models. European models have been considered as relics suffering from the eurosclerosis of an ageing population and as being on the losing side in the face of global competition, the dynamic behind which is seen as being located in North (and also South) America and in particular in South-East and South Asia. Things need not be that way, and Europeans would have an opportunity to come up with positive *visions* for a future in which one and the same model could find room for *democracy and human rights, ecological sustainability and social justice*, as well as *creativity, science, cutting-edge technology and economic competitiveness*.

In addition to the aforementioned cultural models, mention should also be made of *Russia*, which, with all its problems, is gaining power again. Russia is relying for its development on its enormous natural resources and on energy in particular; on the other

hand, Russia suffers from a great many problems, such as poorly functioning societal and economic systems, a weak civil society, lack of freedom of speech, corruption and the ageing of the population in the future.

Muslim cultures (including Pakistan and Iran, of which the former is a nuclear power and of which the latter could become one) could be influential players in the future. The influence of Islam as a religion seems to be spreading around the world.

Of the rising economies of South America, perhaps the most significant will be Brazil. With the exception of South Africa, Africa may be resigned to the rank of spectator in the global arena well into the future.

Globalisation processes may lead to a situation in which different cultures learn from each other and live peacefully in a multicultural global community. Tension and conflicts between cultures are, of course, possible. The course of development taken by global interactions is already so advanced that in the next few decades cultures will come together also in a scenario in which it is thought that a strong desire to separate into cultural blocks may begin to manifest itself. This will probably lead to ever more material and immaterial dealings between people and cultures in the future. Whether this will give rise to mutual understanding between cultures, and a civil society and civil world based on respect, has yet to be settled.

The new stages of the information society

Information society 2

Information society is a compromise concept.⁴² In this report, it refers to the stage of societal development that followed and was technologically more advanced than industrial society and which is characterised by the rise of information and communication technology as an area of technology making its mark on economic and societal activities. Economic investments and returns, productive and service processes, logistics as well as different societal activities are marked by information and communication technology in a quite different way than was the case in industrial society. The information society has long characterised the present in the same way that it will also characterise the near future.

Development has been extremely fast. Microcomputers (PCs and Macs) started becoming more numerous in the workplace in 1980s and not until ten years later in the home. The time when yuppies stood showing off on street corners, idly chatting on their “mobiles” the size of bricks, was some time in the late 1980s and early 1990s – in 1990 the number of mobile phone lines opened per 100 inhabitants was just 5.2 in Finland. In 1998 we had reached a situation where over half Finns had a mobile number (55.2 mobiles per 100 inhabitants). Today, almost every Finn has a mobile (many have two) and it is considered one of an individual’s basic needs, just like a television. *The Internet* forced its way into the wider consciousness thanks to WWW-technology in around 1993–95, but it is only since the new millennium that it has become part of the everyday lives of most Finns (even in June 2002 there were only 3.3 broadband Internet connections per 100 inhabitants in Finland). Wireless Internet is only just spreading through towns and cities.⁴³

The change has been so pronounced and far-reaching that even reluctant people have joined in. It was at the beginning of the new millennium at the latest that a person without a mobile phone, a computer with email and Internet access began to feel like some kind of oddball. It became harder for him to work when, for example, invitations to meetings and their attachments were sent out electronically only, he had to stand by and watch while his neighbour got a reduction by booking his next holiday in the sun online without bothering any human travel agents, and he had to explain why he could not constantly be reached by mobile phone.

The *first and technologically oriented phase of the information society* took place in developed societies in the last three decades of the 1900s. The beginning of the new millennium may be called *the time of the rise of the second phase of the information society*. The focal point of the information society is already undergoing considerable change. Technology is indispensable and it is being constantly developed, but the direction of the near future will be greatly influenced by content and services generated by people's needs.

Until the beginning of the new millennium, for example, mobile phone technology was being developed, there were a great many models and there were several key technology manufacturers in the industry. However, the ways in which mobile phones were used were homogeneous and limited: they were used to make phone calls, to leave voicemails and to send and receive text messages. Today, and above all in the future, such limited services will not satisfy people. In the age-old dialectics of technological and social innovations, it is the turn of the social side for a moment; *the consumer and the citizen are the queen* that is influencing the orientation of information and communication technology and thereby that of the information society, too.⁴⁴ Of all the technological possibilities that exist, people and their communities, such as societal players and companies, adopt only a small proportion as new, long-term, perhaps even permanent operating models and consumer and cultural behaviour.

When this has happened, the old rule applies: *in technology there is no compromising on the advantages achieved*. It is hard to imagine that people would ever agree to give up their mobile phones, their efficient computers or data networks. A person only gives up the technological advantages that he has achieved on account of a catastrophe. The main trend is towards smarter and more diverse technology, and the further spread of the technology and operating models of the information society to *economy, research and training, administration and politics, societal systems and operating models, different forms of culture and everyday life* will continue in the future too.

The information society is shifting into its more elaborate second phase, but *the speeds of change in different areas of life vary enormously*: in technology itself and economy they are fast, in politics and administration they are slower. *Politics*, elections and other forms of influence considered democratic have so far remained rather traditional in essence – people vote as they always have, for the same parties that they have “always” voted for. The information society with its technologies has appeared more on the fringes of representative democratic activity than in the activity itself. The Internet is already used widely e.g. when campaigns are being run, but not when elections are held or when parliaments assemble. New cutting-edge technology has been adopted much more quickly in the exercise of non-representative influence, and many kinds of Internet activism have been in evidence for years.

We will now examine some of the phenomena forming part of the future development of the information society that will have considerable repercussions both on the everyday life of people and on societal activities and influence.

Minorities and individuals in the globalising information society

Globalisation promotes the information society and the development of the information society is a prerequisite for continued globalisation. There have been periods of globalisation throughout the history of humanity, but the current one is unparalleled on account of modern information and communication technology and because the capacity for companies, goods and individuals to move and be moved has hit unprecedented heights. Furthermore, changes in technological development and the dynamics of economy seem to be gaining yet more pace; the world is not just getting smaller, it is doing so at an accelerating pace.

The modern *information society* is quite different from its industrial predecessor just a few decades ago, not to mention the agrarian society that predated the Second World War. There were large social classes in agrarian and industrial society which were relatively homogeneous and between which there were clear and long-standing dividing lines: the peasantry, blue-collar workers, white-collar workers and capitalists. In industrial society the individual was usually a member of one *social class* throughout his life. That applied not just to the individual, but also to his (nuclear) family, i.e. the basic unit of industrial society. There was, of course, a degree of circulation between classes, but the general rule was that membership of a particular class defined a person's life from the cradle to the grave. A labourer was a labourer, did the work of a labourer, read newspapers for the working class and voted for working class parties. He married another labourer and produced a brood of children who also became labourers.

The information society has already broken down the social classes, and there is reason to believe that the same trend will continue in the future as well. The mass professions and the classes of masses which are based on them will be consigned to history. They will be replaced by small groups of specialised professionals and possibly by poorly paid tribes of pariahs in the service professions.⁴⁵ This mosaic-like fragmentation will also affect cultures, religions and non-religions, ethnic groups, values and lifestyle models. Membership of the different groups will often no longer be life-long.

It is possible that over time *the group-based forms of societal organisation*, such as parties, labour market organisations, parishes and many other communities, break down into many different kinds of new and self-organising communities in a very surprising way.

The development cycle of *minoritisation* in such as *models of the family* has reflected the major waves of development in society from the agrarian society to industrial society and more recently to the information society. In agrarian society relatives lived together in extended families, in which all living generations lived together around same yard and each had their roles and tasks adapted to agricultural society. The basic unit of society was the extended family – like in “the house of Koskela” in a classic Finnish novel.

The idea of the nuclear family came about in industrial society. The industrial model split the once extended families of agrarian society. Young adults who were suited to

industrial work moved to industrial localities and the older population remained in the countryside. Industrial work had to be done in factories, and the new forms of transport, the railways and later cars, made wide-scale mobility possible. As has already been stated above, the industrial model spread throughout society. For example, learning no longer took place hoe in hand on the job; instead, special places of learning were required to serve the more elaborate division of labour in industrial society by offering separate forms of training for different jobs. In turn, this encouraged the formation of nuclear families in industrial localities.

The nuclear family was the optimal unit of production and consumption for meeting the needs of industrial (mass) society. It had its heyday, which is now drawing to a close. The *individual* is emerging ever more clearly as the basic unit of the *information society*. A person has different relationships with other people, but his identity is not the tribe, the clan, the extended family or the nuclear family, but rather *the person himself*.

The person of the future will belong to *many neo-tribes*, not just to one social class. Memberships of these tribes may be associated with work, educational background, lifestyles, religions and non-religions or hobbies, and they may be long-term or *very short-term* in nature. Some of the tribes will be virtual. It is clear that even long-term memberships will be more short-lived than the life-long memberships of earlier stages in society.

The individual of the information society may feel a closeness towards people like him all over the world, but will not necessarily feel any sense of belonging towards his neighbours, if indeed he knows them at all. It may well also be that one of his many tribes is a local network of child carers.

The spread of the life model that is described above to people's personal lives may give rise to a debate on *societal cohesion* in Finland, for example. Personal human relationships may become more short-lived and more individual-centred than before. In the mini-communities of agrarian society, people had a limited number of human relationships, but many of them were extremely long-term, if not life-long. The industrial age increased the number of human relationships and similarly moved them in the direction of fewer long-term relationships – for example, many people who had moved to the city for work or studies lost their entire network of childhood friends – and they were replaced by a large number of short-term relationships. The information society is possibly leading to a future in which a person has only a few long-term relationships. At some stage, perhaps in around 2019, the register office in Helsinki may see the conclusion of the first fixed-term marriages.⁴⁶

The idea of always voting for the same party in elections will clearly be unthinkable for future generations; equally unthinkable will be that the same parties put forward candidates from one election to the next – even the same candidates.

The trend towards individual-centredness as the primary identity is a process which has just been launched but which is already clearly visible and which is set to continue in the future. It may be assumed that in the near future – in the next 10–20 years – a strong attachment to the nuclear family model that is based on values, cultures and also political views will be in evidence. This is understandable, and major changes in

attitudes will indeed only take place when the lifestyle models of the new generations make their mark on societal and private life.

Omnipresent intelligence – ubiquitous society

One important perspective on future development of the information society that ties in with the aforementioned trends is *the idea of omnipresent intelligence*. The concept of *ubiquitous society* has been used to describe this.⁴⁷ The English word *ubiquitous* is derived from Latin and means “present everywhere or in many places”.

Ubiquitous computing (a term first used by Mark Weiser in 1988) is omnipresent information technology which functions inconspicuously and blends into its surroundings. It does not disturb the person using it or otherwise disrupt what he is doing. It operates in the daily routines of people and companies, everywhere and at all times. *The ubiquitous network society* is a society in which wireless data transfer and networking are possible for anyone, at any time, anywhere and by any means.

In the ubiquitous society intelligence is to be found in the tyres and control panels of cars, in the walls of buildings, in a pack of minced beef bought at the shop, in a motorist’s overalls, in a chairlift ticket at a ski resort, in a cuddly toy, in grandmother’s pill box and in many other places. Furthermore, these forms of intelligence are able to communicate among each other and with people. In the U-society there are three types of communication:

- reciprocal communication between people on a network (person to person; P2P)
- communication between people and objects (person to object; P2O)
- data transfer between objects, set to increase over time (object to object; O2O 'Internet of things').

Everyday objects and machines communicate with each other wirelessly and regulate their actions independently. In the future, a washing machine may be able to programme itself according to the kind of laundry and how dirty it is. The information point at the health centre will know if an elderly person living at home has taken his medication. A faulty photocopier will call someone to repair it, while an aircraft engine will order a spare part for itself and have it waiting at the next airport.⁴⁸

The U-society requires the development of ultra-high-speed data networks and of the intelligent terminals using them as well as their broad dissemination in society and in devices where we are not used to seeing them. In affluent countries the move towards a U-society is well underway. South Korea and Japan in particular are advanced in the dissemination of broadband infrastructure and in places in the use of electronic identifiers. In South Korea efforts are being made to extend the broadband network to cover all citizens, to bring all citizens and objects into contact with one another as well as to allow reciprocal communication between objects. Work on ubiquity strategy was carried out at the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications in 2006 through an action programme entitled *A new information society for everyday life*.⁴⁹

Ubiquity development will exert a significant influence on a person's work and everyday life and on society more widely – democracy in the broad sense. It will no doubt surprise us in many ways. It is clear that we are constructing an unprecedented “**Some Brother is controlling, knowing and never forgetting**” society. The concept of “*Some Brother*” is not the same as Orwell's *Big Brother*.⁵⁰ Some brother is more reminiscent of Adam Smith's “invisible hand”, steering the market in classical liberalism, and it is a kind of extension of it. In the Orwellian world Big Brother was a totalitarian system which deliberately monitored all citizens. Some Brother is not an individual player, but rather a set of *society players* (the public sector, NGOs) and *market economy* players, and ultimately all of us as *citizens*, each with our own interests. Big Brother has a single address, while Some Brother has numerous addresses, some visible, many not.

All this is heading towards a society of “*gently monitoring, knowing and not forgetting*” without any individual body guiding it – a scenario involving less gentle monitoring is possible if any one player acquires supreme power. Adam Smith's idea of the market was that when people have needs and they produce and trade in goods in order to satisfy their needs, supply and demand with their prices, when they meet on the market and in principle on the assumption of full knowledge, achieve an equilibrium “as if guided by an invisible hand”.

Three key phenomena in the ubiquitous society are thus *monitoring, knowing* and *eternal memory*.

Monitoring. Citizens already leave a lot of information and traces in many places, and most of this is well-intentioned. A mobile phone can tell where we are at any time, our Internet behaviour can be traced, and there are surveillance cameras everywhere. Automatic systems at the health centre monitor whether grandmother has woken up at home this morning, whether her heart is beating, whether she has remembered to take her tablets and go to the toilet. It will not be long before a motorist knows that if he exceeds the speed limit, the risk of being caught is not slight but certain. The same will apply to shoplifting and many other crimes. Getting caught is already highly likely, but when it is certain, one may ask how it will impact on crime. Drunk-driving will become a thing of the past because the drunk will not be allowed to start his car. A pair of glasses will call out if their owner leaves them on the table when leaving a coffee shop.

In the future people will lead *an aquarium life*. It is in principle for people themselves and for societal players and democratic processes to define who or what can look at the aquarium, from what angle and from how close. The issue of protecting privacy in the ubiquity society can come to the fore in a number of ways. In February 2006, the search engine giant *Google* and the American judicial authorities were involved in a dispute over whether *Google* should hand over data about the Internet searches of users of its search engine. The Ministry of Justice was demanding search data in order to protect children from porn circulating online. *Google's* rivals *Microsoft* and *Yahoo* had already agreed to make search details available to the authorities with certain restrictions, but *Google* was refusing on the grounds that it was protecting the privacy of its customers and ended up in court.

The dispute also sparked off a more general discussion about the protection of privacy on the net and the possibility of handing over data being the first step towards a net being monitored by “Big Brother”. It was feared that child porn could set a prece-

dent which could be used as a basis for the authorities later to demand any kind of data from companies running search engines. Following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in the United States (11.9.2001), the controversial *Patriot Act* was enacted and gives the authorities broad powers for investigating people's private lives; the Act was being extended in spring 2006.

This is not just an American phenomenon, but rather it affects all technologically developed countries, such as Finland, for example. The aquarium life is nothing new in itself: people living in the tight-knit village communities of agricultural society were used to living in a community which kept a close eye on the lives of its members. In the future, the technology will be different and the monitor will not be one's next-door neighbour, but a faceless society. Nonetheless, an awareness that nothing is completely private was already a feature of our grandparents' lives.

Knowing. A growing volume of data on citizens is circulating in information systems and building up in databases. Data regarding the state of our health are amassed over decades. The grocery shop will soon know our consumer profile better than we do. An online bookshop will suggest what books we ought to buy on the basis of our purchasing habits.⁵¹ In addition to all the highly personal data subject to privacy protection already, a new and significant set of data will be provided by ever more accurate genetic data on each of us. The ubiquitous society is reinforcing this development.

The eternal memory. However good and decent a life a person leads, things happen that he would rather forget. We are pardoned when we forget and this is clearly vital for a person's psyche. Even today and more so in the future, a person will leave so many permanent traces of himself that his whole life will be able to be *reconstructed* very accurately, and the information will be able to be used for many purposes. In the past, when someone made a mess of something or something else unfortunate happened, he was able to move to a different place and start a new life from scratch. That will not be possible in the future. In addition to monitoring and knowing, the U-society *never forgets*. In Finland there are still legal provisions that oblige the authorities to destroy personal data which are no longer needed. Key issues for the future are what is to be destroyed and whether or not it really is destroyed.

Let it be stressed here that *what has been described above and a great deal more happens with the best of intentions*. Deliberately destructive and criminal attempts to exploit the new ubiquitous technology of the information society are a separate issue. These phenomena will have significant societal effects.

The *positive effect* that the U-society will have on people's everyday lives is manifold and strong. It also opens up significant scope for reinforcing civil society. Old and democratic societal institutions, such as government, the Parliament, municipal bodies and parties, can exploit the potential of the ubiquitous society. The same is true of other ideas and needs for global improvement and of forms of societal influence. *Even those in power will live in an aquarium*. The continued omnipresence of intelligence, entertainment and interaction may also generate all of them. For some companies, the U-economy will become a goldmine.

There are also many problems and threats, described today as *challenges*. These problems concern the development of technology in general; a myriad of innovations

big and small are needed before technology really works and is reliable, business logistics has developed and services function commercially. Societal issues include how widely and at what level the opportunities of the U-society are offered to citizens – and whether the remote Lapland municipality of Sevettijärvi be part of it (as it may well be). How do we ensure that citizens are equipped to embrace ubiquity and that the economic preconditions for full involvement are in place? In the gloomy scenario, citizens will be valued differently in terms of both their geographical and economic potential – varying levels of readiness to embrace development between age groups will also contribute to *ubiquitous gulfs*.

A particularly large set of issues are, of course, posed by *the protection of privacy, data protection and many other ethical issues*. They will have to be resolved again and again as the ubiquitous development of the information society intensifies. What body will be allowed to monitor, know and remember? One danger is the centralization of economic power; guaranteeing genuine competition is a matter for those that write the rule book for society to address.

Let it also be stated that, in modern models of ideal futures (utopias), the ideas of total control of society, of data probing deep into a person's private life and of an eternal memory have not generally been considered to be worth striving for – there has been more of a tendency to be wary of such ideas.⁵²

A new concept of time and place – instantism

Two decades ago telecommunications launched the technological revolution. Mobile communications, email and broadband have gone on to change everything that we do. Right now we are living in a society that is always connected, always switched on and always available.

– Peter Schwartz 2004

In the very next few years, technologically developed societies like Finland will attempt to exploit to the full three strong inter-related trends. The first is *maximum mobility* for the individual. The second is the “always connected to everything” phenomenon, i.e. *universal connectivity*. The third major development trend may seem paradoxical in the light of the first two: there will also be a move towards “a person barely needing to go anywhere”, i.e. *maximum immobility*. Instead, he would more or less be able to do all his business from home (teleworking, virtual travel, online business and shopping, etc).⁵³ At the same time, an individual's relationship with time and how it is used will change.

Mobility, immobility and wirelessness will be key words. In the near future, it will be taken for granted that, as a person moves around as freely as possible, he will find it easy to take a large number of facilities with him. Within ten years, a person going on a motorcycle tour of Lapland will take his office with him, and it will include a computer, Internet connections, email, mobile phone, DVD and MP3 players and a great many more items that are still not to be found even in the most modern of offices.

In maximising his freedom of movement, a person also wants to be as well-informed about his surroundings as possible, “where the nearest place to buy a fishing licence is,

the nearest campsite, shop, taxi rank or Chinese restaurant,” and to be able to communicate by different means, wherever he happens to be. In this way, possibilities for dealing with work-related and other business, looking after his family, spending his leisure time and basically living his life will be as varied, user-friendly and flexible as possible.

A person will also be able to maximise *his immobility* using the same technology. He will not have to leave the home unless he wants to. He will be able to attend to his work from his home office, and the same goes for shopping and dealings with the authorities. Information and entertainment in their many and varied forms will be available from the living-room sofa. Even travel will be able to be handled virtually. After a long period of political wrangling – although not that long, less than ten years will suffice in Finland’s case – such things as virtual voting in elections will be routinely possible via the Internet from home.

John Wayne society. One already visible trend towards a more elaborate information society, which is creating a lack of dependence on place and a new sense of time, is the trend towards a *John Wayne society*. In much the same way as the Wild West hero rode around with his first-rate expertise, selling it to the goodies (with his rivals trading theirs with the baddies), the “nomads” of the modern information society, *wandering professionals* will grow in number at the expense of *organisation people*.⁵⁴ More and more *experts* in a particular field – for example, information and communication technology, architecture, biochemistry, management, medicine, education, different branches of technology, environmental matters, civil society activities, social sciences, philosophy – will *corporatise themselves* and sell their expertise in expert companies formed of either themselves or a few colleagues. This phenomenon is also set to manifest itself in jobs of a different kind that required *another type of training and expertise*. There are already examples of how a municipal home help has set up a company to provide domestic services. A great many more similar service companies are set to emerge in the future.

Mothers working from home

Many mothers are using modern technology – and taking advantage of employers’ growing dependence on free agents – to redefine the idea of staying at home and earning a living without ever setting foot in an office. These mothers working from home represent a growing group in the labour force that is attractive to employers because it enables outsourcing while using domestic labour and avoiding recourse to foreign workers.

Source: *USA Today*, Stephanie Armour, 27.7.2005
(the word “mother” can, of course, be replaced by “father”)

It is even more probable that representatives of *entirely new fields and professions* will do this in the future, for example, an artificial intelligence expert, a systems thinking expert, an intelligent homes designer, a virtual doctor, a virtual teacher, a virtual forecaster, a “virtual anything” (a great many of the jobs done today may be transferred to the virtual arena in the future), an avatar consultant⁵⁵, a gene therapy expert, a “designer babies” consultant, an artificial organs designer, a nanotechnology consultant

and a simplicity consultant (whose job will be to guide people through life in an ever more complex world).⁵⁶

The wandering professionals of the information society have a different relationship with time and place than organisation people. In industrial society, it was essential to *synchronise* the use of time. When one shift of a three-shift job clocked off at eight o'clock in the morning, the next had to be ready to start their own eight-hour stint immediately. The work could not be done either before or after. Production was also *tied to a place*: in addition to having to be ready to start work at a particular time, a shift-worker had to get himself to the right place, the factory. It was not possible to take the paper machine home to work on during the evening. A corresponding model for using time was adopted elsewhere too: in office, shops, banks, etc. As has been mentioned above, the rationality behind the dominant technology and means of production in any prevailing phase of society has also tended to have a spill-over effect and spread to other aspects of society.

We are living at the beginning of the 21st century in an information society, much of whose activity is characterised by the industrial model with its restrictions, which need not exist. For example, in order for members of the Finnish parliament to be able to do their jobs, they do not necessarily ever need to assemble in the granite fortress on Arkadianmäki in Helsinki. Modern technology could have been in use for years already to organise virtual meetings efficiently.⁵⁷

The work of the future will be less tied to a specific time and place. Even today many people – the fortunate ones – can choose, at least up to a point, when and where they work. One might be able to write a report, editorial or book, to devise an IT code or to engage in any other form of creative work sitting better on the porch of one's summer cottage on a Sunday morning than working within the constraints of a clocking-in and wearing a tie in a "nine-to-five" workplace.

The Woody Allen society is always open. The new concept of time generated by the information society – perhaps even paradoxically – includes the shift to the *Woody Allen* society (the 24/7 society). Allen, who is known never willingly to leave Manhattan, is claimed to have given the following reason: "*I want to live in Manhattan because if I happen to wake up at three in the morning and I fancy some Chinese chicken soup and spring rolls, I can get them in Manhattan, whatever the time.*" The basic idea behind the model of the Woody Allen society is simply that, in the future, *society will always be fully open*, 24 hours a day, seven days a week: shops, banks, cinemas, offices, universities, restaurants and gyms.

"Let them be open every Sunday, right away, you old fogeys!"
the Future might say about shop opening times, if it could speak.

The net is always open. The same is true of many service stations and coffee shops. The same goes for the fire brigade, the police force and hospitals, for example. There has been opposition to the Allen society by way of claims that employees will be enslaved

by awkward working hours, and at the same time it has been forgotten that many professional groups have lived that way throughout the era of modern society and beyond. The rule book for working life will in any case have to be agreed on again and again in a constantly changing society. It should already be known that a capitalist's ability to exploit the worker is not dependent on the daily cycle!

The Allen society will be such a clear and strong development course in the future that debates between politicians, for example, on Sunday opening hours for shops – “on what Sundays, what size of shops, until when they can keep their doors open” – seems futile. In less than ten years, Sunday trading will have been freed up, with a few exceptions.

Polychronic time concept. The virtual (Internet) culture of the modern information society makes it possible for a person to be simultaneously apart from others and in constant contact with them – often completely unknown people, such as in Internet gaming cultures. When grandfather bought his first TV, at first TV the whole village came round to watch it, later the nuclear family. On the Internet a person is physically alone at his computer screen, playing, or like more and more people, working at home. He is in contact at all times with other people, yet he is alone.

It is possible that people will spend more and more of their time at home in the future. And even when they are circulating with other people, they will have with them at all times an intelligent mobile communicator⁵⁸, which will allow them to plunge into virtual space in, say, a coffee shop.

A kind of symptom of what is to come, although a familiar story:

A group of young people, four or five of them, sit down at a table in a coffee shop. Their first job is to dig out their mobile phones and start texting. The text messages fly off around the world. Messages are sent and received, calls are made, contact is made with other people – but not with those sitting at the same table.

Many people attending meetings at work do the same: fiddle with their mobiles during the meeting, check their emails, send text messages and reply to them, surf the net with their laptops thanks to the local wireless network, have a quick chat (“on MSN”) with a couple of colleagues and play Internet games while their boss makes his Monday (in itself highly inspiring) presentation. What is important is what is anywhere but close at hand. Sometimes it can even be close at hand.

The *monochronic time concept* (“Meeting from 9 to 10, followed by another from 10 to 11, then writing a memo from 11 to 12, lunch from 12 to 13 ...”) has become *polychronic*: a person is constantly doing more than one thing at any one time. One might also say that whereas things used to be done one after another *sequentially*, processing now takes place *in parallel*.

When a person only participates in a meeting “part-time”, it is not that he is isolating himself, but rather it is a case of *systemic interaction*, in which one can be present and absent at the same time: let us use a term from the world of work and call it *present absenteeism*.⁵⁹ Present absenteeism may become a major trend, which some may develop into an art form or at least a brand.

“We don’t wait. What’s on earth is a queue?”

Instantism. In the longer term, the increasing temporal freedom and independence from place, which will be enjoyed by people as well as by societal and economic players, will undoubtedly lead to *a new understanding of the concepts of time and place*. You will be able to start doing something whenever and wherever. Or not start doing it.

There is a growing phenomenon which can be called *instantism*. In the future, we will no longer wait for things. We will no longer agree to stand in queues. If we want to know the latest news, it has to happen immediately, which is, of course, already possible with quite normal mobile devices. In the past, one of the highlights of the day was the news broadcast on Finnish television at half past eight. That will not be the case in the future. Information, entertainment and communication will have to be available immediately.

In the long term, a person will get used to thinking that he has everything with him at all times, in principle everywhere in the world. He himself will be able to sit on the shores of Kiitämäjärvi lake in Kuusamo in northern Finland, and yet he will have within reach “all” the information in the world, entertainment, his job, contact with his nearest and dearest and, for example, possibilities for exercising societal influence. There will be no need to go anywhere or to wait for anything.

In the information society, the new and developing concept of time and place is a *cultural change*, a delayed farewell to the mental model (paradigm) of the industrial age, which was characterised by the standardisation of the use of time and everything else and the rigid tying of human activity to places. This cultural change is so significant that we can scarcely comprehend all its implications at this point in time.

The real and the virtual will blend into one. In the long term, another phenomenon is set to grow which can be called *surfing in the real world*. *Google Earth* is one example of this.⁶⁰ This enables the user via his web browser to view photographs taken by satellites circling the globe of, in principle, any part of the globe at all and to zoom in very close. It is already possible to see individual cars and people on the street of Manhattan, for example.

The future prospects are also relatively bright: in the future, we will be able to use our mobile communications devices to observe a picture of Ulan Bator, Kempele in Finland, or anywhere else depending on our needs, whenever and wherever. Before long, the picture will doubtless be a moving one. There will be countless economic and societal applications for surfing in the real world, for example, for observing the condition of the environment, police work and rescue operations, administration, planning and economics and the day-to-day life of individual people.

In the future, combining the real world with the virtual world will become a daily routine. For example, the transhumanist *TransVision2006* conference in Helsinki in August 2006 was organised so that the conference events, such as speeches, could be followed in real time on the transhumanists’ own *uvvy* island on the virtual wall charts at the conference centre in the *Second Life* virtual world (“metaversum”). There the topics could be discussed with other virtual avatars. On the other hand, the “real” conference participants in Helsinki could observe from the walls of the meeting room what was being discussed in the virtual world.⁶¹

The merging of “the real” with “the virtual” is becoming part of everyday life. The concept of what is “*real*” is changing.

The ever more complex society of risk and the society of trust based on systems thinking

The information society is also an ever more complex society of risk. Robert A. Dahl, who has researched the development of democracy, has emphasised that *the complexity of public policies* is constantly increasing. The fact that society is becoming increasingly complicated is making it more difficult to understand what the public sector is doing, at the same time as, according to Dahl, “the institutions whose job it is to promote such understanding – education, the free press, political campaigners and others – no longer seem able to perform their task of educating the public.”⁶²

It is easy to endorse the view that modern society is becoming increasingly complex all the time. In addition, the greater complexity has also meant that more features of a society of risk are being displayed, and this development has been underway for a long time. The difficulty in understanding the workings of society is embedded in such deep changes that a simple education campaign will not bring about such understanding.

This group of phenomena will form one of the most important *megatrends* of the future. It has been stated above that each new stage of society is more complex than its predecessor, if only for the simple reason that it contains all the essential features of the preceding phases and in addition something new, which it alone has generated (emergence). The information society of our times is also very much an industrial society and an agricultural society. The advance of the sciences, the splitting of scientific fields into branches of science and of those into sub-branches and into ever more subdivisions, the specialisation of technologies, the increasingly complex nature of society, more elaborate economic division of labour, the separation of fields of expertise as well as the increasingly complex nature of certain networks, are all phenomena which constantly add to the complexity of the world.

Humanity has never before lived in a more complicated world than we do today. The future will probably be more complex. At the same time, the concept of a *society of risk*, popularised by the sociologist Ulrich Beck in the 1980s, has acquired additional and new content. Beck highlighted the material risks of industrial society. Such risks are major traffic accidents, incidents at nuclear power plants or oil-tanker disasters, which were not possible before the industrial era. A jumbo jet could not fall from the skies until humanity had learnt to build it in the first place.

All the risks of the industrial society are still with us today, and there actually are even more of them. Furthermore, there are a growing number of immaterial virtual risks: crashes and viruses in information societies and, for example, power cuts. There is greater scope than before for deliberate action and non-deliberate damage that disable or destroy the systems of the information society.

Some examples of the different ways in which a society of risk manifests itself:

- In 1990 *computer virus* was a rather unfamiliar concept, while in 2001 there were 60 000 of them circulating in data networks around the world. By August 2003, 90 000 viruses had been recorded on the list of recognised viruses. At this point in time that figure can be assumed to be well over 100 000.
- In August 2003 the symptoms of the society of risk were beginning to show. In the first half of August 2003, information was circulating around the world of a new, fast-spreading virus, a worm, for which the names *Lovsan* and *MSBlaster* were being used. The worm infiltrated Microsoft Windows operating systems and sent out random messages to email addresses that it found in a given computer. In Finland, *Lovsan* managed to break into the systems of Nordea, the self-proclaimed leading online bank in the world, and caused dozens of branches of the bank to close on Thursday, 14 August.
- The following week virus attacks were making the news once again. A number of worm viruses were in circulation. The organisation *MessageLabs.com*, which conducts research into email viruses, reported that on just one day the fast-spreading virus *Sobig.F* had been detected on one in every three of the million computers that it had examined. It congested email traffic by sending out junk mail randomly to all the addresses that it could find. The Finnish victims included the email system of the University of Helsinki. At the same time, a second worm, *Nachi*, was disrupting the IT systems of Finnair.
- Considerable damage can also be caused by something as simple as the *electricity supply* being cut off. The whole of modern society runs on electricity. In the very same gloomy August of 2003, during which the aforementioned virus infections occurred, the United States and Canada were afflicted by the worst power cut of all time. As of Thursday, 14 August, around 50 million people were without electricity for a couple of days. In practical terms, everything was brought to a standstill. Lifts, trains, the underground, planes, factory production lines, water pumps, air-conditioning systems, food refrigeration systems in shops and restaurants, lights. The ever-beating heart of nocturnal Manhattan - “the city that never sleeps” - was dark and quiet. The principal reason for the disaster was overload on the electricity network, which was using 50-year-old technology. The distribution network had previously been identified as poor, yet there had been basically no investment in maintenance work of the network, despite the fact that the volume of electricity circulating on the networks in the US had increased 400-fold since 1992 alone.
- Some Finnish energy experts were quick to announce that “that wouldn’t be possible in Finland”. About a week went by and then Helsinki was put to the test by a power cut. A good week after that and 500 000 people fell victim to a power cut in London at peak rush-hour time. Trains and the underground came to a halt and the traffic was disrupted.

- On threat posed by the society of risk is that the *possibilities for strategic action will become concentrated within a small group*. For example, a small number of operators could paralyse the electronic payments system. It is easy to imagine a great many other threats of this kind.
- The complexity of different IT systems has increased and is constantly increasing. In its day, the feared Y2K problem, in other words, what would happen to computer programmes and files when 1999 ended and the year 2000 began, gave us a little foretaste of what lay in store, even though that time nothing significant occurred as far as we know.⁶³ For example, no one manages the Windows operating system. More has been added to it over the years – usually in great haste – and it has also become more complicated.
- Increased complexity in *data networks* has also led to a situation where no one can guarantee that no surprising occurrences will take place or any full-blown system crashes. Whenever a strategic system “wavers”, the consequences could be catastrophic. For example, if the systems of the Finnish Social Security Institution crashed, it would cause disruption to a large part of Finland. If IT systems crash, services within society are paralysed. For example, if some hacker broke into a database of biometric identifiers and stole people’s biometric data, he could do damage to many systems to which access is granted using those identifiers.
- The possibility of *terrorism* cannot be avoided even in a peaceful country like Finland. In the near future, even a small terrorist group could have at its disposal technology with which a nuclear bomb or a biological or chemical weapon could be launched from a mountain pass in a distant country and land to the Place de la Concorde in the centre of Paris, killing hundreds of thousands of people. The threat can never be completely eliminated, not even if world governance advances and a civilised set of rules were to be created that would apply to everyone everywhere. All that is needed is one or two fanatics, and they will always be found.

The typical mechanism in the society of risk is to construct *safeguard systems* in order to guarantee that strategic systems operate. And then safeguard systems are needed for those safeguard systems, and then for those, the result of which is that the sum total of all these systems can become even more susceptible to risk: an even more complicated society of risk is being constructed.

When Beck spoke of a society of risk in the 1980s, he was referring more to the material risks in society. We will have to talk about a society of risk in the future too, but the concept will have to be expanded to cover not only physical risks but also virtual risks, risks associated with the development of information technology, software systems and their use, and with data networks – and in due course the breakthrough of *bio-, material and nanotechnologies* will give rise to what for now are largely unknown risks.⁶⁴

In spite of all the safeguard systems and their meta-safeguards, it may be considered possible, even probable, that in decades to come numerous system crashes, some big, several small, will occur in IT systems and the economic and societal systems based on them. It is nigh on impossible to eliminate such crashes completely.

*Inventions reached their limits ages ago,
and I see no hope of any development in the future.*

– Roman engineer Julius Sextus Frontinus, 10 AD.

There are no signs on the horizon of the megatrend *towards an ever more complex society of risk* drawing to a halt, let alone of any about-turn and a move towards a simpler, more manageable world. According to the Finnish eco-philosopher Pentti Linkola's model of a return to a simple, closed agrarian community, where industrial complexity would have been dismantled, the most important source of energy would be muscle power (from human and horse), in essence all the conveniences of contemporary life would have been given up and the community would be led by an elite "well-versed in survival theory" would be one such society, but its attractiveness in terms of social psychology is close to zero – if not below zero – in most people's minds.⁶⁵

A short history of accelerating change

100 000 generations ago	speech
750	agriculture
500	ability to write
400	libraries
40	universities
24	ability to print
16	accurate clocks
5	telephone
4	radio
3	television
2	computer
1	Internet / email
0	GPS, CD, WDM ⁶⁶

Even though engineer Frontinus claimed otherwise 2000 years ago, development in technology is ongoing, as is the move towards increasing complexity and a more elaborate society of risk; the tempo will probably pick up, as can be concluded from the diagram.⁶⁷ Most people actually expect more complexity – at least they act that way. It is the price to pay for all the material and immaterial wealth that those of us who are fortunate enough to be members of advanced societies enjoy every day.

Without the complex society with its highly differentiated division of labour, there would be no super-efficient computers, amazing Internet or any specialist knowledge or expertise in all areas of human life – economy, medicine, all technologies, etc – which allow current levels of wealth and welfare to be maintained and improved. There would be no efficient travel around the world. It should also be remembered that modern society can, in situations in which a given risk has been realised, offer possibilities for actions that did not exist before. If a car-engine cuts out in the snow on a deserted road in Lapland help can be summoned by mobile phone, which was not the case 20 years ago.⁶⁸

The future with its new technologies will further complicate society, presenting us not least with unprecedented ethical dilemmas, such as how acceptable it is to design the physical and psychological characteristics of an unborn child, how far down that road one can go, and – at some stage – on the very definition of a person.

A Finn goes grey in an urban centre and pluralises

A pioneer of demographic change

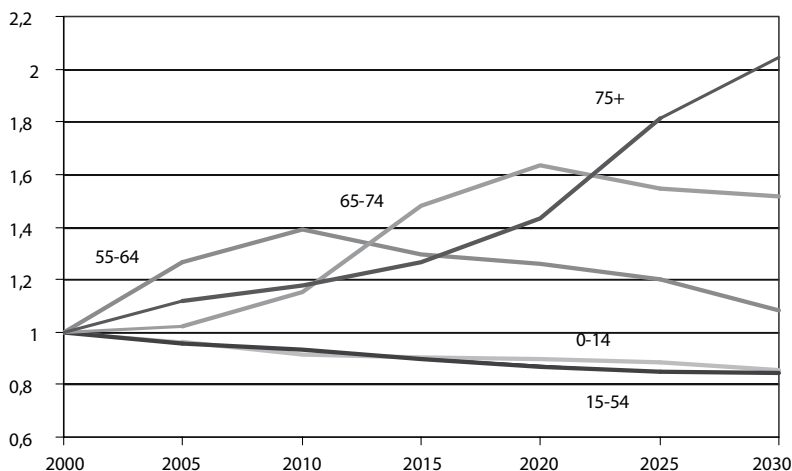
Youth is a gift,
but growing old is an art

– Junnu Vainio

The Governmental Forecasting Network in Finland states in its 2005 report that the age structure of the Finnish population is becoming ever more strongly skewed in favour of the older age groups.⁶⁹ The primary cause of the change is higher life-expectancy. At the same time, the age structure of the population is being greyed by a reduction in the number of children, young people and people of working age. According to the 2004 education forecast of Statistics Finland, the number of children under 15 will go down by 36 000 between 2005 and 2015. At that point, children will account for around 16% of the population, while in 1950, for example, they made up almost a third of the population. The proportion of people of working age (15–64) in the population has been steady for a long time, but a clear downward trend will be visible as of around 2010.

In 2015 those of working age will account for around 63 % of the population and the level will fall below 60 % in the early 2020s.

The size of age groups compared to the current situation up to 2030 (2000 = 1)⁷⁰



Source: Statistics Finland, Pellervo Economic Research Institute PTT.

The number of people aged 65 and over is already growing, but from 2010 onwards that growth will accelerate. Between 2005 and 2015 their number will increase by 270 000. As the elderly are living to an increasingly old age, the number of very old people and their proportion of the overall population will grow. The number of people aged 85 and over will grow by around 37 000 by 2015, and their number is expected to rise more and more quickly in the early 2020s.

The population of the country as a whole has gone up by 17.3 % in 40 years. In other words, there were 4.4 million Finns in 1960 compared to 5.2 million in 2003. According to a trend forecast published by Statistics Finland in September 2004, the total population of the country will continue to grow slightly, peaking in 2030 at 5 443 000, after which the population will begin to fall. There are expected to be 5 367 000 Finns in 2040. According to the population forecast by Statistics Finland, the death rate will exceed the birth rate in 2023.⁷¹

A specific issue that will arise over the next few decades is the effects of *the greying of the demographic structure* on democracy. Age structure in Finland will change considerably in the next few decades and earlier – as much as 15 years earlier – than in the rest of Europe. For the first time in Finnish history, more people left than joined the labour market in 2005. The biggest exodus of people retiring is yet to come and will take place in 2008-2010. The Committee for the Future's background report *Keeping up with Change (Menossa mukana)* to the governmental demographic policy report states: "From the point of view of democracy, it is noteworthy that according to an IMF assessment, Finland will be the first country in the world where a majority of voters will be aged over 50. It is predicted that this threshold will be crossed as early as in 2010. By 2030 as many as a third of the population of voting age will be aged 65 and over. This is one of the reasons why Finnish demographic policy is attracting international attention. Other industrialised countries in the west are interested to know how Finland is approaching the problems of a shrinking and ageing population and how it will solve them. Those aged 60 and over, which is a quarter of the population of voting age, already wields a great deal of political power."⁷²

Professor Olavi Borg has put forward arguments to challenge the view that ageing is always presented as a problem (cf. the above): "In fact, pensioners might be the section of the population causing us the least grief and concern after all. Indeed, some sections of youth and the working population cause enough concern for all of us."⁷³

The possible effects of demographic change in terms of exercising societal influence, such as in the *third sector*, may be highly significant. Ageing people who are in good health, in particular, those living the so-called third age, will become a significant *societal resource*, which should be treated as a valuable resource, both in the exercise of societal influence and in sustaining economic and other beneficial processes. This benefits not only the society suffering from a shortage of labour but also the people themselves, who feel like a useful part of social networks and society when they make their own contribution to it, each according to his own abilities and wishes.

It must also be remembered that the *increase in life expectancy* will reinforce this development. Alongside change in age structure, it is another demographic phenomenon which is separate from ageing but capable of exerting the same kind of societal effects and to which the biosociety can give a powerful boost. Experts have put forward different estimates of the theoretical maximum life expectancy for humans. According to

some, it is 120 years, while others speak of 150 years. Historically, human life expectancy has grown markedly over the very last few centuries. It is probable that the baby boom generation will live longer than their predecessors. The Finnish population has enjoyed constantly improving health. Life expectancy has lengthened and incapacities resulting from illness have decreased. The average life expectancy for a Finnish man at the beginning of the last century was 44 years and for a woman 46, while the corresponding figures for the early 1950s were 60 and 68 and now stand at 75 and 82 years.⁷⁴ The average life expectancy in the EU has risen by five years since 1970 alone.⁷⁵ Life expectancy in prosperous western countries may rise to 100 years over the next few decades.

In the longer term, ever higher life expectancy may have more profound and even surprising consequences for *people's concepts of time, generations and life path*. Increased life expectancy will lead to *a person's experience of the chain of generations stretching further into the past and into the future*. Instead of there being three or four generations of the same family alive at the same time, there may be five or six generations. A centenarian may still be active in working life, possibly in the same company as his 25-year-old great-grandchild.

Many baby boomers will set up a new company at the age of 65 or start a new career, perhaps finally one which they really want.

The baby boomers are growing old and are voting actively, because *their concept of democracy is a primarily representative manner of exerting influence*. They will be followed by Generation X, Y, Z and the rest, who may focus on different means of exercising influence. What kind of constellation emerges from this in terms of the exercise of societal influence is one of the key issues for the future.

One fundamental issue concerns *whether or not democracy in the future will be able to promote multiculturalism in the generational sense*, in other words, be able to create forums and methods for making sound decisions when 16-year olds and 96-year olds in very different life situations are just as likely to be taking the decisions and will also be affected by them. Degrees of life experience, concepts of society and schemes of values may differ from each other a great deal more than in the past.

Scenario 1. Demographic change, increasing life expectancy and the multigenerational dimension may lead to the development of a fruitful, tolerant democratic decision-making culture that thrives on difference and on the "society for all" mindset. The creative transfer of culture to the next generation will be easier, isolation will decrease and society will stabilise. This scenario both requires and generates a capacity to withstand difference and tolerance in many other respects: between cultures and in respect of different values and life, religions and non-religions, races, sexual orientations, etc.

Scenario 2. A gloomier scenario for the decades ahead may be that tense situations are created in which the baby boomers use representative democracy actively, but younger people have economic power and technological expertise at their disposal. We may run into situations

where the Parliament and local councils in Finland are dominated by baby boomers who make decisions in their own interest but where those decisions are not necessarily enforced.

Suburbanisation the Finnish way

Urbanisation is a worldwide phenomenon. The *World Resources Institute (WRI)* estimates that between 1990 and 2030 the global urban population will grow to over five billion, whereupon two thirds of people will live in urban areas. In relative terms, the pace of urbanisation is highest, on the one hand in South-East Asia (4 % per annum), which is undergoing substantial growth in economic and population terms, and, on the other hand in impoverished Africa (5 % per annum). In the developed western world, the proportion of the population living in urban conditions may rise to 90 % by 2030.⁷⁶

Regional centralization has long been a phenomenon and subject of discussion also in Finland, and it is highly likely that this will continue in the future. The number of municipalities is expected to decrease and the significance of economic areas to increase according to futures barometers in the sphere of municipalities.⁷⁷

The assessment made by Statistics Finland of regional development in Finland – certain other futures assessments reveal similar trends – describes the population as moving towards major centres and the surrounding municipalities. People will move from sparsely populated areas to one of two places, to centres or to the cemetery. The Finnish regions of Uusimaa, East Uusimaa, Pirkanmaa, South-West Finland and Åland will experience the greatest relative growth in population. The biggest loser in relative terms will be Kainuu, losing around 25 % of its population between 2000 and 2040.

Suburbanisation: People want everything. A quiet detached house in Nurmijärvi (outside Helsinki) from which there is quick access to an urban centre to put the world to rights.

Whether the information society will decentralise or centralise was a real issue in the early 1980s when the information society was first being discussed in developed western countries and in Japan. Models of many kinds were put forward: more or less “green” utopias were sketched out of a return to the countryside, people believed that there would be a marked rise in teleworking and that the baby boomers would return to their roots in the country to live out their retirement. On the other hand, people reflected on whether or not the Finnish population would become concentrated in the Helsinki metropolitan area and, were that to happen, would it result in superbrains or water on the brain.

There is no need to speculate about this any more. The move to urban areas and their immediate vicinity (suburbanism) has long been a striking development. For a good twenty years now, numerous studies and evaluations of regional development in the future have been coming out. *All the assessments that are to be taken seriously indicate that the trend towards concentration will continue* (until there is nobody left to

move). The speed may vary, but the trend is clear. A few marginal counter-trends are unlikely to change this main trend.

People do not move to urban centres and the areas nearby just because they have to. The natural way for a person to live is not as far away from other people as possible, but rather close to them. A human being is a social animal, and urban centres offer a great many things which sparsely populated areas cannot: in addition to jobs an study opportunities, a wide range of cultural activities are provided (concerts, theatres, expert lectures, etc), colleagues, a variety of recreational pursuits, a high level of social and health services, ethnic restaurants, events, *action* in general, etc.

However, a strong regional centralization is not an end in itself or a recommendation. In the Finnish context, the development of a number of such centres is appropriate if only for the fact that there is space and existing infrastructure all around the country. Nevertheless, the fact that, for example, active young people looking for a good education and demanding jobs are drawn to urban centres is natural and understandable and we should not attempt to prevent it. We know that carrying coals to Newcastle brings bad results; the same applies to keeping all sparsely populated areas inhabited around the country. The development of regions and provinces in the future is unlikely to succeed unless it is accompanied by the development of strong regional centres for living in, expertise, business and culture, and by a conscious acceptance on the part of regional players that there is a driver in the regions – for example, Joensuu in North Karelia, Kajaani in Kainuu, Rovaniemi in Lapland – and that the rest of the province also has to benefit from it.

Regional concentration does not automatically mean that the municipal administration will be organised into larger units in the future. However, such a development is highly likely. How many municipalities there will be in the future is a highly politicised subject, although this is scarcely of interest to the people living in these municipalities. What is important for people and families is whether high-quality health services, a good school, child day care facilities, etc are available close at hand. How many positions of leader of council and chairmen of local authorities there will be in the country is basically of interest to the political parties.

At the beginning of 2006 there were 431 municipalities in Finland. In societal debate one suggestion has been to halve the number of municipalities, and, for instance, Kostainen – Vadén – Välimäki write: “A hundred proper municipalities are enough”.⁷⁸ It remains to be seen what results this political lottery will throw up by 2017, but the trend is clear.

A few decades ago, expectations of technology centres were high. Now it may be considered that a more extensive and more person-based mindset is needed: technology centres alone are not enough; instead, pleasant living environments are needed, day care facilities for children, schools and varied cultural activities. (Even Nokia engineers usually have a family, children and e.g. cultural and sporting needs). Furthermore, with the ageing of the population, health and welfare services, for example, spa services and the tourism cluster as a whole will grow in significance. These environments will also provide a location for companies that will create a new society, companies in the fields of ICT, bio- and other new technologies and an extensive network of service companies.

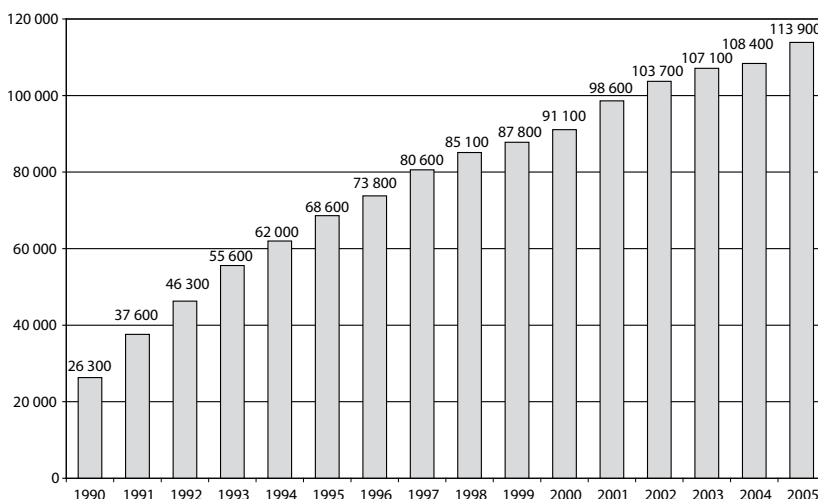
From Finnish culture to Finnish cultures

Finland and the Finns? A small nation in a large country, apart from each other and a long way from everything else. In cultural and religious terms, a homogeneous country built on consensus that is afraid of everything and censors itself just to be on the safe side. A minor nation with a strange language and a harsh history behind it. Still living in huts only a hundred years ago. A harsh climate, for now. On the coat of arms of the nation with low self-esteem is an animal that has never been seen there apart from at the zoo. It is shown struggling above a sabre and brandishing a fierce sword as a sign of a peaceful foreign policy. It bears the hackneyed crown on its head. In spring 2006 a competition was held to find the most depressive Finnish pop song of all time. The field was of a high calibre by international standards.

Finland and the Finns? A much better set of people than they themselves dare to think themselves. Tough, honest and trustworthy. The most diligent of the diligent. Intelligent and inventive. World class in education, science and technology. Zero corruption. Capable of acts of bravery if they dare. Always stand by their friends. Once they have acquainted themselves with a foreign culture, they are its representative's best friend. Home to the world's most favourably treated linguistic minority. Unlike close-by Sweden, Norway and Denmark, it has a genuine republican democracy where all citizens are in principle equal. The Finns, decent people.

The number of foreign nationals in Finland has increased steeply over the last fifteen years.⁷⁹

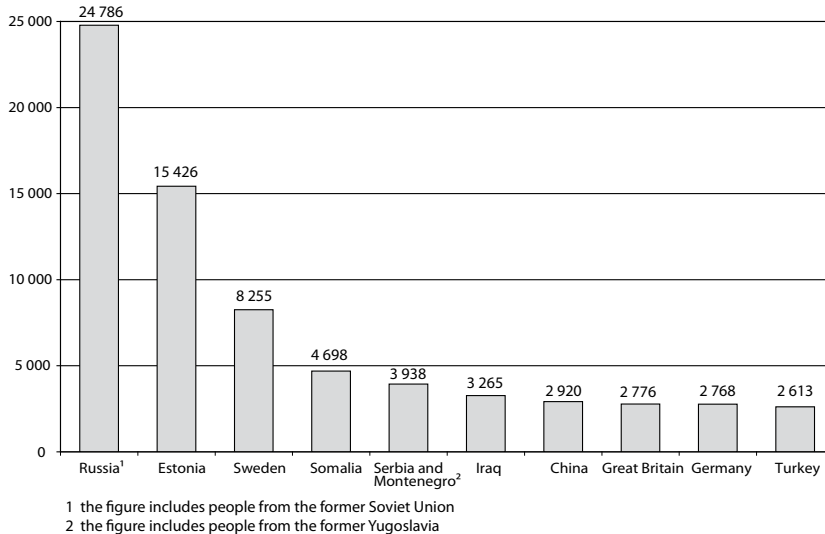
Foreign nationals in Finland 1990-2005



Source: Population Register Centre.

In 1990 there were 26 000 foreign nationals in Finland, and the figure stood at 114 000 in 2005, in other words, they had more than quadrupled in number in just 15 years. The biggest groups of foreign nationals in the Finnish population in 2005 were Russians (24 786), Estonians (15 426), Swedes (8 225) and Somalis (4 694).

The largest groups of foreign nationals in Finland in 2005



Source: Population Register Centre.

Even though the number of foreign nationals in Finland has grown sharply, relatively speaking it is still one of the lowest levels in Europe. In ethnic, cultural and e.g. religious terms, Finns have a highly *homogeneous* past. Only now are we learning about life in a multicultural society and the capacity to tolerate difference and the cultural competence that it requires.

There are times when it is not all that difficult to assess the future. In a country like Finland with an extremely monocultural history, the change can only possibly be in one direction: *towards a wide spectrum of cultures, values, ethnic groups and races*. The aforementioned growth in the foreign population will in itself contribute to that.

Other factors will have a similar influence: the fragmentation of the large majorities and homogeneities of industrial society into the minorities of the information society and global interaction in many ways (technology, economy, politics, culture, such as young people and their gaming cultures). It may indeed be considered that diversification and minoritisation linked to race, religion, culture, language, values and lifestyles and professions, as well as tribalisation and the growth in the significance of lifespan identities, will create *a mosaic-like future in cultural terms*. In that case, Finns will be required to display cultural competence, such as in the form of tolerance of difference.

When they come together, cultures challenge each other, and as has been stated above, a large number of very specific issues come to the fore, as the debate surrounding the use of the Muslim veil in French schools has shown. Unrest is also provoked, of which the violent youth riots in France in late 2005 can be cited as an example. Issues regarding how multiculturalism is confronted will be a part of daily life in Finland too.⁸⁰

The Governmental Forecasting Network presentation of social and cultural change includes the following (italics by the author):

- Previously, people's *identity and lifestyle* were determined to a large extent on the basis of their *work and socioeconomic status* ... Today, lifestyles are fluid, experimental, chosen individually albeit not always consciously, and change from one stage of life to another. Life paths are diversifying: periods of work and study can vary throughout a person's life, in the same way that people can live in different places and countries (which is promoted by the development of communication technology). There is no lifestyle that can be predicated on the basis of a person's time of life.
- *Urban lifestyles* are being reinforced by the growth in urban living. Furthermore, the combination of urban life with life close to nature as well as living intermittently in Finland and abroad will increase with economic growth and more free time (more and more retired people).
- *The communications environment* (media, Internet, entertainment industry) is a key factor influencing identity, and the Internet will to an ever greater extent be a source of human contact, interaction, information and ideas. The time spent on means of communication may increase yet further. The use of different communications devices and services will have manifold consequences in terms of e.g. how a person is able to function and interact.
- For some people identity will increasingly be a "*bought identity*" – you are what you consume. The fight for a hegemony of trade marks is also a fight for the values of individuals. Individual choices are wanted and are possible (customisation).
- Both the global nature of the communications environment and the reinforcement of global brands will cause *the tensions both between the global and the local and between mass culture and individuality* to remain and maybe to intensify. On the other hand, the same worldwide media environment will create a uniform virtual culture: a key status for the English language, the same content and content formats will impact everywhere simultaneously.
- *Different and even conflicting values and choices* will grow stronger and more widespread and the values between individuals and groups will grow apart. Environmental awareness and the standing of ethical and ecological considerations will rise and be seen in consumer demand for products in line with those values. On the other hand, commercialism and global "brands" will gain ground.⁸¹

It is interesting to know that Manuel Castells, one of the gurus of the information age, has identified Finland as a model country in the world of information age with emphasis on culture.⁸² In his view, Finland's strengths include *a strong identity, advanced technology, an ability to create network innovations, democratic civil society and welfare*

society. Problems are associated with e.g. high taxation, as a consequence of which, for example, obtaining foreign labour for hi-tech and content production companies may produce a serious bottleneck in the future.

Some important cultural development trends in the future may be *tribalisation* and *the reinforcement and diversification of lifespan identity*. *Tribalisation* – both the traditional physical village mentality and virtual tribes, i.e. professional groups living in networks and virtual tribes associated with hobbies, for example, the members of which can live physically anywhere on the globe – will characterise the future. In the future, a person will be able to have several identities: he can be a person from Kuusamo, a Finn, a European – and a citizen of the world, and there will be nothing extraordinary and contradictory about that. Or about *a company director simultaneously belonging to a motorist club, sitting on the local council where he lives (or being part of a network of decision-makers in a virtual nation), being a Plan sponsor and being part of a global tribe of numismatists*.

A key part of *a cultural megatrend of values* which has received less attention is the division of *an individual's lifespan identity* into ever more stages, which has been happening for a number of decades. As late as at the beginning of the last century, a person's lifespan in broad brush strokes involved being a child up to the age of 10-15 and then going off to work – to the fields, forests, factories. People got married in their twenties, had children straight away, normally more than one, worked hard to earn a crust, and were old around fifty: walking with a stick, a scarf on their head and counting down their days. Nowadays, *early childhood, childhood and youth cultures* already exist (that did not exist before Elvis and other 50s figures came along), to be followed by the cultures of *twentysomethings, thirtysomethings, the over-thirties*, etc. Researchers into old age divide up a person's lifespan into stages even beyond the age of 60. This *trend towards the diversification of lifespan identity* is set to continue also in the future. It will be influenced by the growth in welfare and in life expectancy. At different stages of his lifespan, a person will have at least a partly different identity and he will behave in different ways as a member of society and as a consumer, for example. On the rise is a demanding group with purchasing power and strong identity, that of *senior citizens*, the baby boomers.

The change towards a mosaic-like cultural spectrum and at the same time the disappearance of stereotypes has been a marked one in Finland over the last 50 years. As late as *in the 1950s*, in the workers' district of Kallio in Helsinki, it might have been possible on the basis of a person's outward appearance to conclude which social class he belonged to. Once one had noted that the person walking towards one was clearly a factory-worker, it was possible to draw a great many apposite stereotypical conclusions about his life and values.

Today, it is almost impossible to conclude on the basis of a person's appearance which social class he belongs to, because there are no longer any clear social classes. The same applies to his ideas, scheme of values and life in general. *There is no reason to believe that this trend towards a multiplicity of values and lifestyles will not continue in the future*. The only larger group that could grow in the future is that of people who have been *marginalised* in one way or another. However, this group may end up being a non-uniform group since marginalisation happens for many different reasons.

Future prospects for society and democracy

Democracy is not perfect – but it is improving

A lot has been said above about technology, economy and society, and less about politics. This is indispensable if we want to understand the logic behind societal development and future prospects. *There is not much that can be said about democracy and the future of politics by studying only democracy and politics.*

It is clear that the societal, economic and technological development phenomena described above will have an impact on the content and forms that the idea of democracy will take in the future. Concepts of democracy in an increasingly elaborate information society as well as the concrete models of democracy and, for example, the applicable technology will all change. The economic and social basis of the societies of the future will give rise to societal tensions as well as societal aspirations, movements, possibly new ideologies and even political parties that are based on those tensions. Information and communication technology will be used before long on a routine basis in all forms of societal influence, including at elections. Changes are already taking place in the information society, but more are expected, as new technologies – bio-, material and nanotechnologies – begin to characterise society and people's lives. Ethical issues surrounding inter alia genetic modification will arise, the alternative solutions to which have nothing to do with the original and fundamental ideological solutions of the political parties that came into existence in agrarian and industrial society.

Futures thinking versus western democracy

From the perspective of a futures researcher, the prevailing political culture in western countries displays many characteristics which are practically opposed to the fundamentals of futures-oriented thinking. The differences are described in the following table:

Paradoxes of futures thinking in democracy

Futures thinking	Prevailing (representative) democracy
Futures perspective: long term, decades or beyond	Futures perspective: short term, parliamentary cycle (often four years) or the budget year
Long-sighted approach – “sometimes you have to say ‘no’ today to have something better tomorrow”	Short-sighted approach – “rewards and gratification have to be immediate”
Multi-sectoral systems thinking	Sectoral “not my job” thinking
New mindsets (paradigms, ideologies) and ways of organising societal functions are generated in information society and its successors	Mindsets and ways of organising societal functions (party system, etc) date from agrarian and industrial society; no change
Ever more complicated (complex) society; difficult and challenging to fully grasp ideas	Simplification; temptation to sell citizens simple solutions, which “the nation” also expects
Change – accelerating change, emerging issues, unpredictable surprises	Status quo, clinging to positions achieved, predictable trends and lack of change
Time and forms broken down in processes	Time and forms determined in processes
Visions; objectives and the value debates that they spark off	Modern information society has covered old ideologies; new ones are not born
Proactive approach – “future there to be made”; futures analysis of change factors in operating environment and inspiring visions form a basis for strategies for grasping the future	Reactive or passive approach – react at last minute or “future there to be drifted into”, inadequate ideological or inspiring visions of the future (Salla, Finland, Europe, world)

Unless a special effort is made to develop democracy, the problematic nature of this situation will intensify in the future. The interdependence of different parts of society and its systemic character will become more pronounced. It is not enough for each minister to “attend to his own patch”, because events in one sector have direct and indirect effects in a second (and third) sector. Furthermore, the divisions between sectors are unclear and they are constantly being subjected to pressure to change. Societal, economic, technological and other systems will be increasingly complex in the future, and there will be no simple “one fell swoop” solutions. Changes are not coming to a halt or even slowing down, but rather the reverse is true. Clinging to old models and advantages already achieved will be less and less effective and is irresponsible in terms of what is in the interest of society as a whole.

Without a futures-oriented ideological debate on values and visions, the future will not be “taken into grasp”. However, such societal debate *with an objective rationale* is normally shied away from, and debate *with an instrument rationale* is preferred instead, about competitiveness, for example. “Orthodox” futures thinking can be expected not to talk about the means until the objective has been identified, i.e. what the means are there to pursue.

Particularly noticeable as we move into the new millennium has been the lack of inspirational ideas when debating the future of Finnish society and, for example, of the European Union. For instance, the utopias of the dual society were still being actively discussed in the 1980s.

It may also be thought that the state of affairs just described is one that people will be satisfied with in the future too. And perhaps there are grounds for being satisfied on account of the fact that an ever greater proportion of societal, economic and technological development phenomena will take place outside of representative political processes and beyond their reach. "Since political players are slow and old-fashioned, let them keep clear of real development." This would spawn a democracy scenario which could be called *the scenario of being hamstrung by the mind set of the industrial age*. In general terms, it may be considered that this kind of paradigmatic rigidity will lead to growing difficulties for democracy as a system in the future.

Another democracy scenario could arise if the idea of democracy, models, technologies and practices is developed so that *democratic decision-making would be more futures-oriented than it is today* and would be able, at least to a certain extent, to influence phenomena of change in an increasingly complex societal reality.

To the credit of western democracies, it should be stated that we have the right to recognise and flag up these critical considerations; the situation is better than in some other cultures. When it is said that western democracies are suffering from a kind of *chronic short-sightedness*, it is reasonable to remember that a commonly made claim in futures research circles is the following: "*The western white male dominates futures research and the debate on the future.*" It is repeatedly claimed, indeed to their credit in debates between futures researchers, that *the field is dominated by western culture*, and what is worse, *white (middle-aged and bearded) males*.⁸³ Basic concepts and definitions, ways of thinking, methods, projects already conducted, the themes discussed, the books referred to, conference programmes, keynote speakers, the gurus quoted, the most prominent leaders of organisations in the field, etc are saturated with western male energy, it is claimed. To a large extent, it may well be true.

It may cautiously be concluded that, while systematic futures assessment is not an automatic feature of everyday culture in western democracies, it is even less automatic in certain other cultures. However, making this point is different from making a point about what kind of culture will function in line with ecologically sustainable development and what kind of culture will be home to the world's happiest people.⁸⁴

In western countries, the prevailing general idea of a future imbued with the imperative of change is, however, not an imperative in itself. No deterministic law of nature forces us to make the future any different from the present. That everything should stay the same may also be a future to strive for.

This is not a long way from saying that democracy is not an absolute imperative, a necessity that overrides all other considerations. It is possible that the world's happiest people live in a country that has never heard of the idea of democracy – and where a language is spoken that has no word for future.

Democracy and freedom in the world

Emeritus Professor Wendell Bell of Yale University analysed the current state of democracy and its future prospects in an interesting text *Futures for Democracy: The Long-Term Trend toward Increasing Social Scale*.⁸⁵ If we assess the future prospects for democracy *at the level of headlines*, i.e. on the basis of what subjects and messages feature constantly in societal debate in the media, according to Bell, we may arrive at the following views of the future of democracy:

- Sizeable and unjust societal disparities both between states and within them; also widespread poverty. There are masses of people in the world who feel that their own leaders, the global system, wealthy nations, supranational companies and sometimes international institutions treat them unfairly.
- The interference of economic power in political processes. As the importance of economic resources in politics grows, it will erode the basic expectation of democracy that all citizens should have relatively equal political resources at their disposal.⁸⁶ For example, despite efforts in the United States to control campaign donations, different interest groups and lobbyists wield a great deal of power through the money they pour into political campaigns. In Bell's view, it is normally a case of pure corruption: "People pay to play".
- The rebellion of extremist religious movements. Different extremist religious movements, who are driven by their faith in their own divine and just mission, reject earthly reality. The most striking example is al-Qaeda, but other similar groups pose a permanent threat to peace and security through their recourse to violence.
- The rise of a new American empire. Extensive influence is exerted on the United States government as represented by the administration of George W. Bush by the New American Century group, and the actions of the government are justified by the "war against terrorism". According to some observers, the United States is striving to dominate the whole world.⁸⁷ Following the attacks on the World Trade Center (9/11), there have been attempts to restrict civil liberties in the United States (Patriot Act) and stifle dissenting voices, and some minority groups have suffered harassment. In Bell's view, away from home the United States bribes, intimidates and uses military force in order to control the actions of other governments and the world's key resources – including the oil reserves of the Middle East.

It would be all too easy to add to the list of threats to the future of democracy. Here are just the most significant of them:

- *Size, complexity, speed and governability*. The global population, the sheer scale of economic and other activities and their impact on such as the environment, the complexity of systems and the accelerating dynamic of all events both at global and local level have set an unprecedented challenge to the *governability* of devel-

opment, irrespective of how much support there is for the idea of democracy in the world.⁸⁸

- *International organised crime.* It is reckoned that the sum of money circulating through organised crime in the world currently stands at over two trillion euros (2 000 000 000 000 €, compared to a combined global military budget of “just” one billion euros). According to a World Bank estimate, the authorities are bribed to the tune of around a billion euros annually, even though it is unclear just how much of it comes directly from organised crime.⁸⁹ International crime is ever more efficient, better organised and carried out on a larger scale, and it always erodes the foundations of democracy.
- *Phenomena associated with the society of risk.* There is no need to repeat here what has been said above about the society of risk. However, it should be remembered that a scaling-up of activities like that expected in international organised crime also applies to terrorism: even a small terrorist group may be able to use weapons of mass destruction in the future; we have already started to talk about the SIMAD phenomenon (single individual being massively destructive), i.e. one-man “terrorist groups” capable of mass destruction.⁹⁰
- *Information wars.* In industrial society, the majority of societal influence has moved and is now exercised through the mass media. In the information society, the importance of communication technologies is growing all the time and is diversifying at the same time. The Internet may be within reach of most people within 20 years – probably sooner. The new information and communication technologies are developing and spreading rapidly all the time. This may reinforce democracy by making the action of those responsible for administration more transparent, by increasing the scope for citizens to give feedback and by making those responsible accountable for their decisions and actions. On the other hand, the scope for information to be manipulated is greater than ever. Undemocratic administrations are able, almost at will, to modify the picture of reality that they offer their citizens and to do so very convincingly. Information wars may break out in other ways, for example on the Internet: on the Internet a rumour can be made to look as true as a fact.
- *Mass migration.* Large, unmanageable flows of migrants may put pressure on democratic systems to manage development. In the future, mass waves of migrants may cause inter alia environmental destruction, economic disparities, famine and war. This phenomenon is already at work.

If the future of democracy is considered only on the basis of the features, threats and prospects described above, the result is a rather one-sided and gloomy view of the current state of democracy and its future prospects.

Another angle on the subject is to examine the long-term trends of democracy. The *emergent* nature of societal development has been addressed above and includes increased complexity in terms of different economic, societal, cultural and other activities and systems and, on the other hand, a growth in the scale of systems. Wendell Bell also considers that society has increased its geographical and societal scale, continues to increase it and is at the same time forming a complicated set of criss-crossing social networks, many of which are global. When examining the development of *governance* in particular, a number of long-term development trends emerge.⁹¹

Firstly, *democracy has become the prevailing form of legitimate governance*. For example, Robert Dahl, who has conducted research in this area, estimated that by 1999 86 states were democratic, while the number of independent countries at that time was put at 192. The number of democracies was clearly higher than at any time in the history of humanity.⁹² When assessing just how democratic a given country is, it is more a question of varying degrees of democracy than an *either/or* dichotomy. Dahl used *inter alia* free and fair elections and civil rights as criteria in his evaluation. Bell considered that by applying looser criteria, one could arrive at a higher number of “democracies”, perhaps around the level of 120.

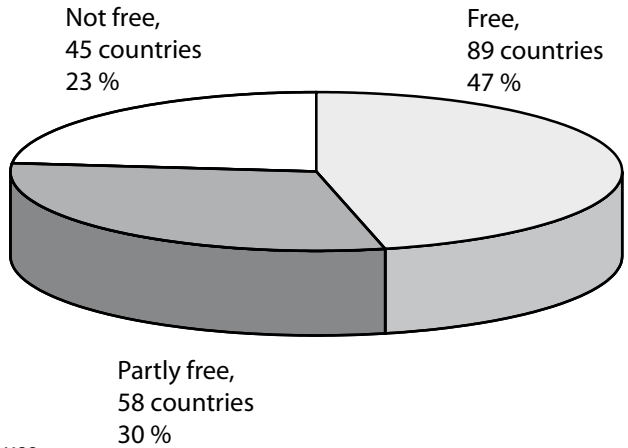
The number of people who fall *within the definition of politically equal and are thus entitled to participate fully in political processes has increased significantly*. Previously, there were many restrictions in terms of who could belong to the political community. Political participation was limited by such as birthplace, religion, property, sex, race, payment of tax, profession, level of literacy and age, which meant that only a small minority of adults were eligible to participate. As we move into the new millennium, the scope of the group has grown to encompass in many countries all adults (males at least) who have the nationality of that state.⁹³

Freedom and democracy have chalked up victories around the world. In western countries, there are many ideological supporters of *democratism*, democracy and the civil rights and freedoms closely associated with it. They even take it for granted that democracy is the best of the forms of governance invented so far – if nothing else, the least bad. However, as we know full well, this view is not universally held.

Reference was made above to research by Robert Dahl into the change in the number of democratic countries. *Freedom House (FH)*, which has its headquarters in Washington DC in the United States, is a non-governmental organisation which monitors and supports the spread of civil rights around the world. It classifies states in three categories: – “free”, “partly free” and “not free” – using “freedom” criteria such as freedom of expression and religion, freedom of association, respect for law and order, the right to personal self-determination and the rights of the individual.⁹⁴ “Freedom” as a concept is not without its problems. As Freedom House has chosen to use it, it appears in the following presentation of their findings.

According to estimates by Freedom House, of 192 countries in the world, 89 were free, 58 partly free and 45 not free in 2005.⁹⁵

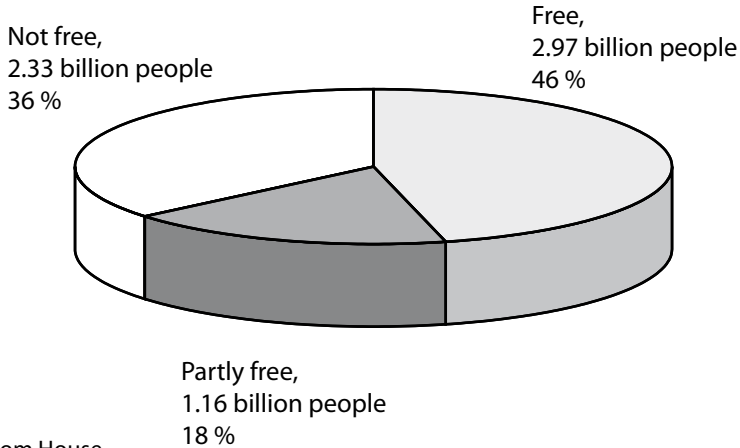
Freedom in the world in 2005, the number and relative shares of countries



Source: Freedom House.

Of the world population, 46 % (2.97 billion people) lived in 2005 in countries which Freedom House considered to be free, 18 % (1.16 billion) in partly free states and 36 % (2.33 billion) in countries that are not free.

Freedom in the world in 2005, population levels and relative shares

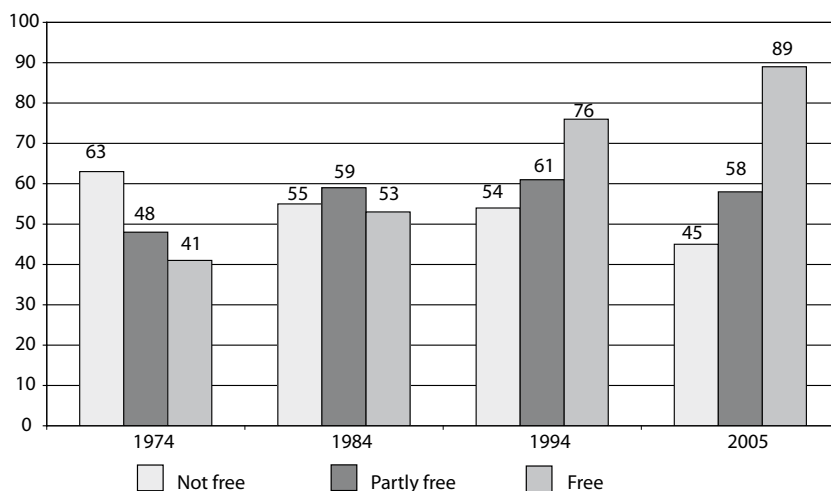


Source: Freedom House.

Although almost half the people in the world lived in 2005 in countries which Freedom House classified as free, more than a third lived in conditions in which they did not enjoy basic political rights and civil freedoms.

The number of free countries has risen over the last 30 year. While there were 41 in 1974, there were 89 in the Freedom House classification in 2005, in other words the number has more than doubled. At the same time, the number of countries had gone up by 26 % (152 in 1974, 192 in 2005). The collapse of socialism had a part to play in the higher number of independent states. During the same period, the number of countries considered not free had fallen from 63 to 45.

Freedom in the world 1974–2005, number of countries



Source: Freedom House

In Freedom House's view, in 2006 only 17 % of the global population lived in countries where freedom of the press prevailed. This figure is worryingly low.

The bedrock of "free countries" has grown more solid over thirty years. However, there is no reason for democratists to be wildly optimistic. The progress achieved has been slow and does not say anything about the future with any certainty.

The fall in importance of representative democracy ... or the rise

Representative democracy – like an old marriage?

In their broad study of democracy, *Elections and Democracy in Finland (Vaalit ja demokratia Suomessa)*, Lauri Karvonen and Heikki Paloheimo point out that Finns value democracy highly, but confidence in the political institutions that exercise it and in their effectiveness has declined among citizens. Around 90 % of Finns consider democracy to be a better system than other forms of government. However, only about 40 % of Finns said that they have at least some degree a trust in the Parliament. The corresponding figure was 25 percentage points higher twenty years ago, so the drop is remarkable. Compared to the record figures of the 1960s, the turnout at parliamentary elections in Finland has gone down by about 15 percentage points, and by about 20 percentage points in local elections. Indeed, turnout at election has fallen in Finland more than in most developed democracies.

The fall in *turnout at elections* has been a subject of discussion and of concern among researchers and politicians for a long time. Sami Borg, who has conducted research into electoral participation, states that for a representative democracy to work it requires elections to work, for elections to work they need parties to work, and for parties to work they need citizens to participate. As for the participating citizens, their

number will not grow unless there is a view of citizenship which considers participation to be a virtue. According to Borg, when it comes to elections, the key attitude among citizens, which could perhaps even be called a value and which is a relatively constant approach that develops throughout life, is that taking part in elections is an obligation.⁹⁶

Karvonen and Paloheimo point out that one should separate the issue of why turnout at nationwide elections has fallen in recent years in most western countries on the one hand, from the issue of why turnout has fallen more in Finland than in most western democracies on the other. Advanced democratic industrial and to a great extent information societies are no longer as deeply divided along class lines as in the early 1900s. Changes in the structure of professions and business have narrowed the gaps between social classes and brought down the barriers between them.⁹⁷

To talk of classes in today's world is actually old-fashioned.⁹⁸ As has already been said, professions have split into groups and large homogeneous groups like those of a hundred years ago no longer exist. People have many identities and groups that they relate to. It has become customary to say, as indeed Karvonen and Paloheimo also do, that the ideological differences between the parties have got smaller. The differences between the alternatives that are presented in political decision-making appear to be only slight.⁹⁹

The view that political approaches offer no real alternatives can be endorsed, but *the mantra that the ideological differences between the parties have shrunk is partly illusory in the view of this report's author*. The party programmes have perhaps come closer together, but their basic ideologies have scarcely changed. The change has been predominantly in society, economy and in the technologies on which they are based. We will return to this issue in the section dealing with new ideologies.

The welfare society and conflict. As Karvonen and Paloheimo point out, the rise in standard of living and the construction of a welfare society and welfare state have reduced conflicts between groups in the population. People often feel that the political alternatives on offer barely differ from each other, and in addition these alternatives are restricted to a much greater extent than before by the basic conditions laid down by the European Union and globalisation. Furthermore, decision-making seems increasingly technocratic – civil servants wield a great deal of influence and even ministers prefer to read out papers teeming with figures written by those civil servants than to give their own impassioned and inspiring ideological speeches from the government benches of the Parliament.

All the above has probably contributed to voting no longer being as stimulating as it once was. According to Karvonen and Paloheimo, in Finnish society there are also a number of specific criteria which explain the drop in turnout at elections and also citizens' alienation from political activity. The first of these is the tradition of *consensus politics*, which has been contributed to by a single approach to foreign policy, understandable in historical terms, and by a multi-party system, typified by coalition governments (in which the parties have to be able to cooperate). Furthermore, pay bargaining policy and thinking in tripartite terms have also been part of national efforts to achieve consensus.

Another Finnish characteristic is low *subjective citizen competence*, in other words people's own experience of how easy or hard politics is to understand. In a European Social Survey in 2002-2003 respondents were asked: "How often do you feel that poli-

tics is so complicated that you do not really understand what is at stake?” The alternative replies given were: *never, rarely, occasionally, sometimes* and *often*. 48 percent of Finns replied that politics was either sometimes or often so complicated that they do not really understand what is at stake. The figures for the other Nordic countries were noticeably lower: 28 percent for Denmark, 27 for Sweden and just 23 for Norway.¹⁰⁰

It is unlikely that Finns have any more trouble understanding things than anyone else. What is more likely is that what is at play is the attitude that politics is “for the big boys”. It is somewhat paradoxical that, while all the aforementioned Nordic countries are monarchies, the subject mentality is more alive in republican Finland, which is in principle a purer embodiment of equality and democracy. In this respect, we have to bear the burden of the cultural heritage of a long history.

Karvonen and Paloheimo consider that “as strong collective identities have crumbled, the subject mentality has been transformed into low citizen commitment and disaffection with the political system. Insufficient education, low income, a non-political childhood home are all factors which statistically explain low citizen commitment and disaffection with the political system ... The significant of insufficient education as a factor explaining low citizen commitment and political alienation has grown over the years. In this respect, our society is moving slowly towards a meritocratic system in which people with modest intellectual resources run the greatest risk of being marginalised in the exercise of active citizenship.”¹⁰¹

The threat of increased disparity and disaffection has long figured in futures debates. I myself wrote the following in my book *Kvanttihuippu tulevaisuuteen? (A quantum leap into the future?)* in 1998: “In any case, perhaps the most significant threat created by the development of a globalising information society is the increase in social inequality. At worst, we are moving towards a society in which social inequality is more absolute than 150 years ago at the time of Karl Marx. In those days, economic and social inequality was a glaring injustice. However, it may be argued that intellectual capacity, talent, was to be found in all layers of society. Without it, the badly off would never have been able to realise their situation and take determined action to remedy it.”¹⁰²

Karvonen and Paloheimo draw an important distinction between stable and unstable democracies: “Democracy is still valued, even though trust in political institutions and in their effectiveness has declined. It is precisely this that distinguishes Finland and other stable democracies from unstable democracies. In a stable democracy, citizens’ dissatisfaction with politicians, the government or parliament does not diminish their regard for and faith in the democratic system as such. In unstable democracies, for example in many European countries in the 1930s and today in some former socialist countries, the dissatisfaction felt towards politicians and governmental institutions has dented people’s regard for democracy overall ...

In overall terms, the state of electoral democracy in Finland is a source of some concern. Over a number of decades, voters have grown apart from parties and politicians, and confidence in the effectiveness of democracy has declined. These factors have contributed to the falling turnout at elections. Party-based representative democracy is clearly being put to something of a test. However, the parties may take a degree of comfort in the fact that Finland in this respect is ultimately a rather typical western country and what is happening there is part of a broad international trend.

Nor is it true that party negativity has given rise to political apathy amongst citizens in Finland. Interest in politics has grown over the last decade or so and has already

reached the record highs of the 1960s and 1980s. Finland is clearly part of the group of northern and north-western European countries whose populations say that they are interested in politics at least to a degree.¹⁰³

Interest in matters of common concern, in politics, is channelled through other means than through the traditional parties. Over the last twenty years or so, the popularity of various new forms of participation has been on the rise. These include boycotts and appeals, for example. Moreover, people's involvement in associations and trade unions still tops the international table. New highways of influence are the Internet and new information and communication technologies. Finns fare extremely well in international comparisons when it comes to the information and communication technology that they have at their disposal, their experience as users and how skilled they are at using it.

A majority of Finns also support *direct democracy in the form of referendums*. However, the reasons for this vary. Referendums are supported by people who feel alienated from politics, who have no more faith in the parties than in the effectiveness of representative democracy, and who want important issues of society to be decided upon by referendum. On the other hand, referendums are also supported by people who have faith both in their own ability to exert influence and in the effectiveness of democracy. They want to increase the scope for citizens to participate by adding new forms of participation, such as referendums.¹⁰⁴

In summary, Karvonen and Paloheimo state: "The dissatisfaction felt by many citizens towards the effectiveness of democracy in established western democracies seems to stem from the fact that they value democracy and want more of it, but they do not really know what the natural ways to extend democracy would be. The economy has become international and nation states are increasingly bound by events in the international arena. Local, national and international politics can no longer be kept strictly separate from one another. The ideological differences between the parties are also less pronounced, and the dividing lines in political struggles often tend to run within the parties rather than between them. All these developments increase the level of confusion about how democracy should be reformed to meet the expectations of modern civil society."¹⁰⁵

More power for direct influence?

Professor Olavi Borg has stated that the importance of direct and representative forms of democracy has varied through history. *The relationship between representative and direct democracy* is one of the biggest issues surrounding the future of democracy. Representative methods – the Parliament, councils, boards, committees, commissions and, on the other hand the European Parliament and the other EU institutions – are often basically *desperately slow* at embracing new technological, economic and societal processes.

Now and in the future, these processes are by nature fast-moving and may get faster still. What role will representative decision-making play in the future, when it has insufficient capability to keep pace with development even today? In fact, much more can be expected of sound decision-making than merely reacting quickly to technological or other forms of change, be this in the public or private arena. *Sound decision-*

making also in society is futures-oriented and based on assessments of the long-term development prospects.

The development of the information society is a good example of how difficult it is to govern the future in a rapidly changing world. For example, *the Internet* has developed in a self-organising manner, with representative decision-making stumbling on behind. Technology had been used widely and in many different ways before representative decision-making had time to reflect on, for example, a rule book for the Internet, the relationship between the public and the private, etc. An issue in its own right is that of Internet governance, which has been debated *inter alia* at the UN World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS).¹⁰⁶

Rapid technological development confronts representative bodies with rapidly changing situations and increasingly tricky issues. The new copyright law that entered into force in Finland in early 2006 was met with mixed feelings following wrangling over CD protection technologies and copying, for example. Without expressing a view of the author as to whether this law was dead before it was born, it is easy to predict that it will have to be revisited very soon.

One of the main thrusts of futures assessments has long been that *the exercise of non-representative influence* will increase in the future. What is meant by this is *inter alia* a more active civil society, citizens' referendums, more influence for the third sector, the use of Internet power and sometimes also the operation of market forces.

Influence originating directly from people is part of real civil society democracy. However, it is not without its problems and it may be asked, for example, if direct influence in the form of (non-stop) referendums, which could technically be held every day at different levels (village, district, nation, EU ...) would constitute *a maximising of democracy* or *over-simplification* and at worst a tyranny of ignorance.

When run properly, citizens' referendums provide an excellent method and they may be used in many different ways in the future. However, one must keep a cool head and bear in mind that in actual fact squeezing ever more complicated societal issues into a "yes", "no", "don't know" mould may seriously distort reality. When reality is firstly grossly over-simplified and then people vote on the basis of inadequate knowledge, it may be said – not to downplay democracy but in the name of honesty – that in that case a lottery would be as accurate a way of "sounding out the nation" as a referendum.

More often than they can be set out as a simple yes or no, cases of decision-making in a complex society involve various alternatives and those alternatives are complicated in their own right. Indeed, it is conceivable that in the future citizens' referendums will be organised on the basis of *sets of scenarios*, whereupon insight would be gained into the courses of societal development that people think should be pursued. Should this happen, the need to be fully conversant with the different options soon becomes pressing.

Another point to consider is the fact that particularly those active in politics often tend to over-estimate people's interest in influencing all kinds of issues in society. In reality, quite a lot of people want to concentrate on their own lives, families and demanding jobs, and they are not interested in expressing a view on where every drainage channel is located in their municipality, let alone in any other.

Wendell Bell takes a tough line on direct democracy in the form of citizens' referendums. In his view, administration by referendum rides roughshod over the rights of

minorities and individuals. Representative democracy enables careful consideration of informed decision-makers, which at least from time to time leads to the right decision being taken in a country's interest, instead of satisfying the selfish interests of the groups that individuals belong to. Direct democracy provides short-sighted answers to political issues. In Bell's view, it threatens the principle of reasonable and fair play, the freedom of the individual, the protection of minorities, the principle of legality and other features of democratic societies.¹⁰⁷

It may be said that *citizens' referendums are such a valuable method of exercising democracy that one should bother citizens with them only after careful consideration and only on crucial issues on which there are clear options that will send societal development off in different directions*. This does not mean that "an important issue" could not be a very local issue, for example.

Non-representative forms of participation. According to Bengtsson and Grönlund, non-traditional participation among Finns has increased over the last 30 years. Data collected in 1975 indicates that 19 percent of respondents had at some time point *signed a petition*. The corresponding figure for data from an election survey in 2003 was 39 percent. During the same period, the number of people who at some point had taken part in a *boycott* or a "don't pay" or "don't buy" campaign had gone up from 1 percent to 13 percent. According to data from 1975, 6 percent of respondents had taken part in a demonstration at some point, while the corresponding figure was 13 percent in 2003. Using the same research as a basis, it has been stated that people's readiness in principle to participate in those non-representative forms of action is far higher than their actual participation. The willingness to sign a petition stood at 76 percent in 1975 and at 80 percent in 2003. The corresponding figures for willingness to participate in a boycott, "don't pay" or "don't buy" campaign were 44 and 58, and in a demonstration 59 and 50. Thus, according to this research, the willingness to demonstrate has fallen.¹⁰⁸

A civil society of minorities, the power of experts and the society of risk

The weak and indispensable nature of civil society. According to Wendell Bell, in some countries people feel a sense of powerlessness, mistrust, cynicism, confusion and a desire to back out of participation in the face of weak, ineffective or corrupt political leaders and institutions. In other countries, the extreme polarisation of political views destroys civil debate and prevents compromises from being struck. At international level, global action rarely takes civil society as its basis. [How could it, given how under-developed global civil society is? Comment by the author]. Globalisation usually takes the form of action stemming not from joint agreements but from unilateral decisions by supranational companies and the "faceless" market. Furthermore, when a super power operates unilaterally, it threatens the stability of the international order. Domination and decentralisation take place simultaneously.¹⁰⁹

Civil society may be understood as a third key societal player alongside states and economy. Unlike states and other institutions exercising coercive power, civil society does not wield coercive power like an administration, but rather brings people together on a voluntary basis in alliances and communities. It can be understood as a network of relationships that has been formed to reinforce communities and to promote their interests and ideologies.

In Finland a reinforced civil society has long been considered desirable, at least among societal activists. It speaks volumes that a policy programme on citizen influence is one of the policy programmes of the Vanhanen's first government.¹¹⁰ Highly positive though this may be, it should be remembered that civil society in its most genuine form is what people themselves (demos) do without any guidance or official programmes (kratos).¹¹¹

Online chat rooms and Internet tribes are to the civil society of today and the future what youth clubs and labour associations were to the civil society of the past. Civil society is developing in a manner which is self-organising, unplanned and full of surprises.

The civil society of minorities is making its contribution to how the terms "representative" and "non-representative" will be understood in the future. One of the biggest trends in society has long been *the development from a society of majorities to a society of minorities.* The major social classes are fragmenting into small and changing tribes, and the cultural, ethnic, religious, etc spectrum is widening all the time. This raises many issues that concern democracy. For example, what is a "democratic majority decision" when there is no majority? If we have 21 minorities of more or less the same size, and 11 of them are of opinion "a" and 10 of opinion "b", it is perhaps in some old sense democratic for the group of 11 to force the group of 10 to follow its line, but will this correspond to how we understand democracy in the future? In the future, perhaps we will have to learn to think that *society is actually plural.* Laws, rules and agreements are being developed over time so as to allow very different social lifestyles to coexist within the same society.

Possible wild card: the move towards minorities will lead to chaos in society, and some religion or ideology will quickly gain influence over scattered minorities and will ultimately usurp all power for itself.

There is a danger that people will begin to produce random and momentary (ad hoc-) majorities that will use majority decisions to ride roughshod over the rights of minorities. Dictatorships of majorities will develop about which it is not really known what the majority is at any given point. There is a low level of governability of societal development in such a situation.

The society of risk and the role of experts will add another dimension to how the future is moulded. What will happen if the constellation *citizenship and democracy versus expertise* emerges in an ever more complex society of risk? For example, in Finland there has long been criticism of the increased role of, for example, those who are appointed to posts in the municipalities in relation to elected officials. In the simpler society of the past, for example, leading politicians may have been relatively familiar with the whole of the local council's sphere of activity, the big issues facing schools and road construction as well as social care, and they were able to challenge the views of the appointed expert officials. In modern complex society, an individual elected official ends up to a large extent having to trust the expertise of the appointed officials. Such an arrangement will be seen to a even greater extent in the future.

The ultra-realist: “We live in a democracy officially, but in actual fact a meritocracy is dictating the course of development. Everybody knows it, but the game goes on, because it runs reasonably well that way, and alternative methods are undesirable or catastrophic. Furthermore, the game can still be made to look as though the politicians are making the decisions.”

For example, Professor Riccardo Cinquegrani considers that many of the most important societal changes in modern society happen nowadays via mechanisms that are beyond the reach of parliamentary influence. In his view, one reason for this is “the scientification of politics”, in particular the use of expertise in politics. Scientific and technical experts advise decision-makers, however without speaking with one voice of authority. As a consequence, effective monitoring, consideration and decision-making in many, if not most, areas of politics are way beyond reach of the typical parliament. “The sovereignty of experts complements parliamentary sovereignty, but competes with it at the same time.”¹¹²

One question for the future is how democratic methods should be developed so that *meritocratic expertise* can be combined with people’s “*value expertise*”, which they express through parties and movements in society, so that decisions and actions reflect values and experts remain within their remit.

In order for an increasingly complex society to function, and to function well in the future, we have to be able to trust that all the parts of the societal system that interact with each other systemically also function. Special expertise and overall systemic understanding are needed, in other words systems intelligence. Paradoxically, the more elaborate *the society of risk* becomes, the more stringent the requirement that the society of the future in order to function is also *a systemic society of trust*.

It may also be said that *a complex society of risk will culminate at a global level that is woefully ill-prepared to govern it*. For example, renowned futures researcher Hazel Henderson held the view years ago that the world had become too complicated for the existing global and national institutions to be able to manage development. Henderson believed that global governance in the future requires inter alia thorough reform of the UN and increased influence in global development for international civil society organisations.

About representative and non-representative influence

We will now briefly set out some of the factors that will impact on the significance of representative and non-representative influence in the future:

1. *New groups in society* (tribes) have sprung up and there may be more to come. There are new kinds of societal tensions that may breed popular movements, possibly parties. From the perspective of power organisations in society, these are not planned and take them by surprise.
2. However, there are no major homogeneous groups in the population that would lay the natural foundations of *political mass parties*.

3. The constellation *majority power – minority rights* will change when there are only minorities left: more and more sensitivity towards minority rights will be needed (“a democratic ethos” on the part of the ruling elite), but how the forms of power will develop in relation to those rights is very much up in the air.
4. Because the new groups (tribes) represent small minorities, they will not become big ... unless there is *a surprise*: a particular issue brings together a large group of people – but what? It has been suggested that the people who have been *marginalised* in different ways should come together to form one relatively homogeneous future group, but will that become a force for revolution? The baby boom generation as senior citizens will form a relatively large group, even though it will probably be a heterogeneous one. A known or unknown religion or ideology may take off.
5. The future culture of minoritisation may lead to a situation where an increasing number of citizens’ referendums are conducted, also restricted by *other criteria* than geography – for example, only children, women, cyclists, doctors or gays can participate.
6. *The popular movements of the future* will have to be understood in the broad sense; in addition to *world improvement movements*, extremely selfish *elite tribes* may appear and phenomena that serve their interests; movements may also form around many specific issues, such as the *Right to do!* -movements of relatives of Alzheimer’s patients demanding an acceleration of stem cell research.
7. One may raise the provocative question of *whether a person’s desire to be subjected or at least led will be an eternal barrier to the birth of a real civil society*. As Gustav von Hertzen puts it, is the conviction offered by any charismatic political leader [or religious leader, comment by author] better for the so-called ordinary person that a value nihilism that breeds uncertainty?¹¹³ The desire for strong leaders grows particularly in uncertain situations, such as in war (Mannerheim in Finland in the 1940s) or in the throes of a recession (Lipponen in Finland in the 1990s).
8. *Expert power* (meritocracy) is already a reality, and as society becomes more complex, there will be pressure for it to grow. The relationship between citizen opinion, representation and expertise is one of the core issues surrounding future influence.
9. A more in-depth *society of risk* requires a new way of thinking – the development of a *systemic society of trust*. This means confronting one of the core features of modern society: an increasingly advanced specialisation and a growing need to understand and govern society as a whole have to be “pulled off” simultaneously.

10. *Democracy as a learning process*: different surveys show that people value authoritarian institutions the most, such as the police and the judicial system, and would be prepared to increase their power; a different view is taken of the real players in representative democracy, the political parties, which are felt to have too much power.¹¹⁴ It should be pointed out at this juncture that a democratic civil society is a demanding learning process, and *citizens may also be expected to come of age democratically and shake off their subject mentality*.

The technology of the information society in societal influence

The Internet is already an instrument of power

In early August the papers reported that the defence forces had been forced to send some recruits home because they were addicted to the Internet. According to the captain who reported this, some young people are so captivated by the Internet that they cannot see their military service through to the end.

– *Tietokone* magazine 10/2004

The Internet is already a real instrument of power. An instrument of influence at least. It is clear that as the younger generation in particular are spending hours of their time on the Internet every day, this is affecting how they think and what they do in one way or another. Even though the majority of the time is spent on games, chatting and surfing for entertainment, it is more than just that. The Internet is influencing how people think and how they act in their own lives and in society.

In reflecting on the future significance of Internet influence, a lot can be learnt from how quickly and profoundly mobile phones transformed our whole culture into one where we are always available everywhere, at work and in our private lives. When technology is cheap, easy to use and meets people's real needs, it spreads quickly and efficiently.

Internet chatting takes place in so many forums, in smaller and more local circles and among global professionals and hobby tribes, that scarcely anyone can have a good overview of it. A person could easily spend 24 hours a day taking part in only a fraction of the chats in purely Finnish chat rooms, for example. The subjects are anything under the sun and the levels of the chat vary extremely much. However, the wealth of silly messages is irrelevant. What matters is that people are conversing all the time and influencing each other's opinions; at a conservative estimate, hundreds of thousands of comments are being zapped off on the Internet every day in Finland alone. Only 10 years ago the whole phenomenon did not even exist.

At the 1995 Finnish parliamentary elections, very few candidates had their own website. Less than ten years ago, online *candidate selection machines* were not taken at all seriously. Not all candidates could even be bothered to input their own details. In the new millennium, we are in a situation in which in practice every candidate has

some kind of website and there are numerous candidate selection machines taken seriously at each election.

Nowadays, it makes sense for a candidate to make carefully considered views available for use in a candidate selection machine, since a growing number of voters are using such machines as a genuine support in deciding who to vote for. Many young people do not keep track of politics at all, but they know how to carry out effective comparisons of candidates online, just like when they buy an MP3 player from an online shop. Precisely the same is at stake at elections: the parties offer their candidates on the political market just as manufacturers their MP3 players on a different market.

Online candidate selection machines have also improved both technically and in terms of content. At first, they were purely for entertainment purposes. When the voter answered the questions put by the machine and received a list of candidates “close to your way of thinking”, knowing the candidates and the parties, he was forced to conclude that “I won’t be voting for any of those”. Gradually the results began to seem more credible; still even today they can vary enormously according to what is asked and what reply options are offered.

The Internet is being used increasingly as an instrument of conscious societal influence. One of the first clearly political examples was the online primary to select the Democrat Party’s presidential candidate in the United States in June 2003. Behind this was the 2 million-member *MoveOn.Org. Democracy in Action*, whose primary (failed) mission was to topple George Bush in the 2004 presidential elections and which was even then a vehement critic of the war waged, in its view on non-existent grounds, against Iraq in early 2003. Indeed, *MoveOn.Org* expressed its views on Bush and his administration in no uncertain terms: “We have to get rid of those bums”.¹¹⁵

MoveOn.Org organised an e-primary on 24-25 June 2003 between nine Democrat Party presidential candidates. Over 300 000 people took part in the vote during the 48 hours. The result does not matter – no single candidate polled over 50 percent of the votes – what matters is that the e-primary was organised at all. It was a sign of things to come and a message that the act of voting is shifting from wooden polling booths and pencils to electronic voting rooms, homes, libraries – and to computer keyboards. And, as in this example, this is happening before actual elections.

Around the same time, Howard Dean and his supporters successfully used the Internet to broaden their support base and to raise funds in the Democrat primary. Their campaign used *meetup* (meetup.com), an Internet tool devised to allow social groups operating online to form.¹¹⁶

It has been estimated that the *blogs* that covered the elections in the United States in 2004 influenced the elections and turned out to be one of the mainstream media high-ways to the Internet. In comparisons of how actively political blogs are used, their impacts and the “buzz” that they generated in political coverage in other media, it was observed that blogs had a significant impact on both campaigns and press releases, in both the Bush and Kerry camps. Perhaps a slight exaggeration, but it was even asked if blogs had become “*the Fifth Estate*” of society.¹¹⁷

In this respect too, the world is changing significantly and will probably have surprises in store. Local, national and global popular movements use the virtual world on a routine basis and to ever greater effect in exercising influence. At this point in time, the Internet is the supreme means of civil campaigning in terms of speed. For example, standing in the rain on a street corner to collect signatures to promote something

good or get rid of something bad will seem like something from the Stone Age to future generations.

Electronic voting

A little prediction: cardboard election posters will disappear from the streets in the near future. "Environmental pollution," people will say.

The use of information and communication technology in voting at elections will become a routine matter in the very near future. Different kinds of voting machines have been in use for years in, for example, Belgium, the Netherlands, India and the United States.¹¹⁸ In Finland the government did not propose that electronic voting be added to the Election Act until spring 2006. Electronic voting will be tried out for the first time in the 2008 municipal elections in three constituencies, Karkkila, Kauniainen and Vihti.¹¹⁹

Full-blown *online voting* took place in local elections in Estonia in 2005 (see Jatta Jännäri's description below).

Experiences of online voting – the Estonian local elections 2005 (by Jatta Jännäri)

The Estonian local elections at which it was possible to vote online for the first time were held on 16.10.2005. However, plans had been afoot to enable online voting for a long time before that, and in 2002 a decision was taken that online voting would be possible for the first time in the local elections in 2005 (Kalamees 2005). A decision was taken to try out online voting in practice before then. In January 2005 the residents of the city of Tallinn took part in a small-scale survey by voting online. The results were encouraging and the voting system functioned without any problem (E-hääletamine võib tulla juba sügisel 2005).

As the project advanced, President Arnold Rüütel expressed opposition to online voting and did not give his endorsement to the parliamentary bill on the subject. In Rüütel's view, online voting violated the Estonian constitution, which stipulates that all citizens have to be given equal opportunities to vote. As per tradition, a person entitled to vote at an election can cast only one vote, but online voters had the opportunity to change their mind and vote again. However, the Parliament and the Constitutional Commission did not see any contradiction and the decision was taken to use online voting (E-hääletamine Eestis 2005).

The purpose of online voting was to increase turnout at elections by offering a new kind of channel for voting available around the clock (Kalamees 2005) and also to take the hassle out of voting for citizens (Elektrooniline hääletamine 2005). However, it was only possible to vote online for a short period, from 9am on 10.10.2005 until 8pm on 12.10.2005 (Valimised ja e-hääletamine 2005). What made online voting special was the fact that the voter has the opportunity to vote on several occasions. If the voter voted again on line, only the last vote was counted. Voters also had an opportunity to vote again on the official election day in the traditional way, whereupon the vote cast on the ballot paper was the one that counted. A vote cast online could also be cancelled

completely, and the voter had the opportunity to check the vote that he had cast online after the end of the online voting period by way of the Estonian electoral committee (*Vabariigi Valimiskomisjon*) or on the official election day at the polling station in his constituency (Valimised ja e-hääletamine 2005). The opportunity to vote again had been included in the online voting system for security reasons. If an elector had been threatened or coerced when casting his vote, he had an opportunity to cast the vote of his choice later (E-hääletamine Eestis 2005).

The votes cast online were counted on the official polling day at 7pm, after which the total number of votes was forwarded electronically to the cities and municipalities (Valimised ja e-hääletamine 2005). 9 317 Estonians (ca 1% of voters) availed themselves of the opportunity to vote online. 30 of these voted again in the conventional manner. A total of 9 287 online votes remained valid (Vabariigi valimiskomisjon 2005).

Voting online required the voter to have with him an ID card, the type of which is unique in the world to Estonia. The ID card for proving one's identity carries a photograph and includes an electronic identity. The card can also be used to give an electronic signature. The card can be used to prove one's identity in a shop, bank and or in dealings with the authorities, for example, but using the electronic features of the card requires a computer equipped with a card-reader (Kodakondsus- ja migratsiooniamet 2005).

In technical terms, online voting worked as follows: the voter inserted his ID card in the card-reader and navigated to the official election site, whereupon the voting system recognised the voter. It was possible to vote at any computer provided it had a card-reader. On the basis of the voter's identity number, a description of the candidates standing in his constituency was provided. The voter made his choice, which was then encrypted by the system. To finish off, the voter confirmed his vote by way of an electronic signature, i.e. with a confidential PIN code. When counting the votes, the system deleted the digital signatures given by the electors in order to maintain anonymity (Elektroniline hääletamine 2005).

Online voting aroused many different fears and prejudices. Columnist Henrik Roonemaa writes that Estonia solved the security problems associated with online voting in a brisk Carlsson-on-the-Roof manner "by taking a small risk", as chairman Ene Ergma had put it to encourage his audience at an e-election seminar in September 2005 (Roonemaa 2005).

According to the Estonians, the number of online voters will grow in the future. Henrik Roonemaa writes in his column that Ivar Tallo, the head of the e-state academy (*e-riigi akadeemia*), predicts that there will be 30 000 online voters at the parliamentary elections in 2007. Tallo points out that when it became possible to submit a tax declaration (*tuludeklaratsioon*) online, 1.7% of Estonians used this opportunity. The corresponding figure today is 76%. According to Tarvi Martens, the e-election project manager, the current online voting system is capable of receiving 150 votes cast simultaneously every second, so there is the capacity to cope with an increase in voters. Furthermore, voting online may seem like a trivial issue compared to dealing with money matters and banking online. The more business people deal with on the Internet, the bolder and more trusting they will be in their Internet use (Roonemaa 2005).

An interesting point is that the growth in the number of online voters in Estonia has

a lot more to do with the banks than with politicians. Indeed, online voting requires the presence of an ID card, which is used most for virtual banking purposes. Those who do not have an ID card use lists of session-specific passwords (which have long been behind the times in security terms) when banking online. If the banks were to ban the use of these passwords in the near future, the volume of online voters would probably increase ten-fold quickly (Roonemaa 2005). Furthermore, Roonemaa speculates in his column that in large countries online voting will scarcely be used for years to come, since the bigger the state, the greater he risks associated with elections.

Online voting generated lively discussion on a great many Estonian message boards. Naturally, some Estonians were in favour and some were against. Here are some selected comments from Estonians regarding the problems associated with online voting. User name Nero writes on the site of the newspaper *Eesti Päevleht* that online voting does not guarantee complete privacy, especially in small localities. For example, if in one place only two online votes were cast and both were for the same candidate, it is clear at the count who voted for whom. Problems also stemmed from the fact that it was necessary to download special safety licences if a computer did not have them before in order to be able to vote. Many voters had difficulty downloading and it also raised doubts about the safety of licences. Furthermore, the vote had to be confirmed using a PIN code. Many online voters had not used their code beforehand and had to collect it separately from the bank. Moreover, it was no longer possible to vote online on the official polling day, and not all those who were keen to vote online were aware of this.

In spite of being exceptionally technologically advanced, Finland has been cautious about implementing electronic voting and has basically been stalling. In the future, people will take it for granted that they will be able to vote electronically and while on the move from wherever they happen to be on each occasion.

In the future, online voting will not pose any problems and will be possible in many different ways. For example, an election voting page could be set up on the Internet, which the voter could sign on to securely, confirm his identity and cast his vote electronically. The voting will be able to take place wherever there is access to the Internet.

The technology works, but online voting is not without its problems. How electoral secrecy, independent voting decisions and a possibility to verify the results can all be ensured, and hacking into information and communications systems prevented, etc are crucial issues.¹²⁰

The use of the Internet – and also of mobile phones and interactive digital television will, for example, facilitate participation in the electoral processes for people living in rural areas and for older members of the population.

Fears have already been expressed that, at the same time as new technologies can increase participation in elections and bring about higher turnout, using them brings with it the risk that the credibility of elections will be affected detrimentally if people can vote for their favourite pop star and their political leaders with one press of a button. However, democracy can work even when it is not rigid and full of formality.

In addition to not being dependent on a specific place, another key feature of online voting is, of course, *temporal freedom*, because a vote can be cast, say, in the middle of

the night during the period – for example, two weeks – which has been set aside for the voting to place in the first place.

From parliamentary cycles to continuous intelligent voting?

Socio-economic change is gaining pace all the time, as this report has pointed out. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) provided a telling description of how the pace of development had been picking up over 150 years ago: “*And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.*”¹²¹

What indeed would Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels say now that a period of a few years is an eternity? In the age of the Internet, email and SMS, years have become weeks, days, even hours.

We set up a societal movement this afternoon, tomorrow it will be a party,
and we will launch the revolution at the weekend!

The accelerating pace of change in society is generating pressure to quicken the pace of parliamentary change as well. Elections are an opportunity for citizens to control the popularity of their representatives, be they local councillors, members of parliaments, presidents or other institutions elected in elections. In the turmoil of rapid economic, technological and societal change in the 21st century, four years is a long time. That gives a citizen ample opportunity to become dissatisfied with what his representative is doing and to want to give his support to someone else. Six years, which is the current term of office of the Finnish president, is a really long time.¹²²

Reference was made at the start to Jim Dator’s definition of democracy: democracy is a form of governance and a process which provides every person who is affected by the actions of an independent entity with the possibility to influence those actions constantly and with equal opportunities.¹²³

Let our attention be drawn to the word *constantly*. The voting cycle of the future will probably not be four or six years – why should it be? – but rather a more flexible model. There are many possibilities.

A long since mooted idea is that of *continuous voting*, which would allow each of us to signal what we think of how matters are being handled on an ongoing basis. A vote can be cast and it can also be taken away whenever a person sees fit. There may be problems with the practical implementation of the idea – “*I lost my seat in Parliament yesterday, but thankfully I got back in today*” - but they are not insurmountable. The main trend, the move away from rigid cycles of representative influence towards other solutions, could well become reality in the next few decades, and there is good reason to work for that to happen.¹²⁴

Modern times and new technology offer very different possibilities than the old methods when it comes to this and other previously presented ideas of *how to diversify electoral influence*. It should be remembered that people were once satisfied with rigid parliamentary cycles and very rudimentary voting methods because in those days there was not the technology to do things more cleverly.

An example of how influence could be diversified is by *weighting votes*. I do not just vote for Miss X, but I vote for her with an A weighting. At the same time, I have the possibility to vote for Mr Y with the same or some other weighting, B. I will maybe have ten weighting points at my disposal, which I can give to ten candidates, one point each, or all ten points to one exceptionally good candidate. Perhaps I will also give *minus points*. I can use ten negative votes as I see fit to oppose the election of one or more candidates.

As technology becomes even more familiar to people and advanced, why not go further? Why would representatives actually be needed if people could adopt positions on key issues directly on a daily or weekly basis? The legislative drafting apparatus would do its job and people themselves would conduct “citizens’ referendums” on a daily basis. Referendums could be held on concrete issues but also on the alternative values guiding the solutions to those issues. Such a set-up would be extremely demanding for citizens too, of course: they would have to study the issues properly so that we could talk in terms of carefully deliberated voting decisions.

The non-stop models of diverse influence of the future could be called “*intelligent voting*”.

The problem in the future will not be the technological possibilities at all but we human beings ourselves. It is clearly wishful thinking to imagine that people would spend ever more of their time on societal influence if it were at all possible. Many bright people have other things to busy themselves with, like demanding jobs and bird watching trips.

On the other hand, in an ever more complex world the level of required qualification is going up everywhere, including in politics. Achieving a proper understanding of societal issues requires considerably more effort than in the simpler world of the past. Democracy is a demanding model, and it would be irresponsible to make new technological possibilities available if those that are to avail themselves of them were not to be in a position to take carefully deliberated decisions based on thorough examination of the issues.

Virtual participation, swarm activism and a boundless virtual democracy

Virtual administration and participation. The use of the Internet and other information and communication technology (ICT) in services improves and optimises many administrative services. Virtual governance has developed in technological terms in advanced countries in many different ways.

An intrinsic part of virtual governance is *virtual participation*. In addition to forging contacts between people, specific virtual tools are being used to promote participation, reflection and the building of communities. These tools include programmes for group work and development tools for communities functioning according to the online principle, games and simulations, just as much as they include referendums and surveys. Here are some examples of forms of virtual participation:

- Well-known democracy expert Benjamin Barber developed *PnyxUnchat* software, with which participants in a virtual discussion could agree on ground rules for their discussion and select a moderator for the discussion. Games and simulations

have been used as aids in high-level policy formulation in the United States, and not just as diversion for adolescents and young adults. For example, simulation games work very well in urban planning. It has also been observed in the United States that people are no longer willing to take part in *telephone surveys* to the same extent as before, while hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in votes organised on the Internet.

- In conjunction with the US presidential elections back in 2000, *Knowledge Networks*, a company specialising in online votes, organised a virtual panel involving 700 people to express an opinion immediately after an election debate on who won, Gore or Bush. CBS News could use the result immediately after the debate.
- *The Infinite Library*, which Google has started to compile, will give the citizens of all countries access to information that is currently “hidden away” in not very accessible libraries. Google is digitalising millions of library books in full and is making all of them available on the Internet. Access to printed information in the world will definitely have a considerable impact on how the new generation sees the world.
- One adaptation of the role of the Internet in democratisation and the construction of virtual infrastructure is *UNPAN (The United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance)*, which circulates information on best practices and e-administration.¹²⁵ E-administration is a rapidly spreading feature of reinforced democracy.
- The Internet enables self-organising forces that are developing democracy to act at global level. For example, the “*e-Government Project Website*” looks into innovative electronic models for administration and participation in forging public policies and implementing sound administrative principles, such as transparency, participation, responsibility and information management.¹²⁶
- The *Tele-nation* concept is one attempt at addressing the *brain drain* from the developing countries by associating experts living overseas with development processes in their homeland, thereby extending the concept of democratic participation. For example, the embassy of Cap Verde in Washington DC has started to associate citizens living abroad with development work and diplomatic processes back home. Cap Verde is an island state off the west coast of North Africa, most of whose inhabitants live somewhere other than on the islands themselves, half a million of them in the United States.¹²⁷
- The US State Department organises on a regular once-weekly basis a *webchat* aimed in particular at foreigners which in principle anyone can participate in.¹²⁸ The purpose of the discussion is to describe the American view on issues that are topical at a given point in time. Questions posed by the participants can be answered by an authority setting out the official government line or by an expert in the field. Generally speaking, anyone can participate provided he registers beforehand via an email address administered by the State Department in order to acquire a password.

The *State of the Future* report assesses the development of online participation as follows: “The Internet has increased the possibilities for citizens to give feedback on matters of public interest using e-administration applications and other electronic instruments. As a consequence, governments are expected to become ever more accountable for their actions, transparent and responsible to their citizens. An ever increasing level of technological sophistication and the interaction between information technology, marketing, competing on intelligence, organised crime and potential information wars increase the scope for manipulating information. The freedom of choice which typifies democracy requires an assessment based on reliable information. In order for further democratisation to take place in the future, it is important to develop methods to try to prevent the manipulation of information.”¹²⁹

In technologically developed countries *virtual participation in societal activities* is very much on the increase. This includes *virtual information acquisition and contacts* as well as decision-making and the *citizens’ petitions, town meetings and referendums* that lay the ground for it.¹³⁰

In many respects, Finland has been on the cutting edge of developments in creating infrastructure for new information and communication technology and applying it in different fields of life. *Banking transactions* have long been dealt with at payment terminals in public places; nowadays, more and more people pay bills and attend to other transfers from their home computers. A large proportion of transactions between *companies* have long been handled electronically. Compared to business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, *consumer trading online* (business-to-consumer, B2C and consumer-to-consumer, C2C, for example e-auctions between consumers) has progressed more slowly, but it is part of everyday life and will most probably increase in the future. There has been an increase in the use of electronic services in *people’s official dealings with the authorities*. For example, *the tax authority* has had an exemplary website for a number of years already, and people have been able to deal with a lot of tax matters electronically for a long time. At the same time, the tax authority has reformed its operating practices and traditional tax declarations have been done away with.

Ten years or so ago, only a handful of *municipalities* had their own websites. Now it is hard to find a municipality that does not have one, and at the same time the content of the sites has grown and diversified hugely. Massive amounts of information are made available to local residents on a lot of municipal affairs at the preparatory phase. In actual fact, so much so that *a person could turn online monitoring and participation in what is happening in his own municipality alone into an almost full-time job*.

The Parliament, government, ministries, parties, civil society organisations and other societal players actively exploit the technology of the information society: websites, message boards, email use and other applications of new information and communication technology are in many ways already a reality when it comes to societal action, the exercise of influence and decision-making. In the near future, these functions will shift to an ever increasing extent to the area of wireless *mobile activity*.

The Internet offers citizens ever improving opportunities to acquire information and form opinions about issues. At the same time, citizens can *contact their members of parliament* ever more easily. The threat of *information overload* in terms of these contacts is a real one and in many respects has already been realised. The growing deluge of emails may lead to them being deleted without being read or to superficial mass replies being sent. On the other hand, resourceful people can solve these prob-

lems in creative ways with the help of new information and communication technology. In the future, a variety of ways of thinking about, arranging, organising and taking on board information may emerge.

Citizens can draw up *electronic petitions* for use by parliaments and councils, and in principle a virtual referendum can be held on any item on the political agenda or “virtual meetings of townspeople” can be organised locally, which representatives of administrative bodies and any citizens who are interested can participate in.¹³¹

At best a virtual town meeting can be a new version of the old meeting “*of the wise men sitting on the court stones*” (cf. the Stones of Mora, where the medieval kings of Sweden were chosen).¹³² Virtual meetings will not just discuss, they will also take decisions.

Virtual parties and swarm activism. The Internet and other new information and communication technologies are of assistance in forming brand new models for the exercise of influence. These can be exploited by established groups, such as political parties and civil society organisations, or by new phenomena, such as *virtual parties* or “*swarm activism*”.

The membership of political parties has been in decline, but *the number of citizens involved in parties in the virtual sphere* may go up. People do not necessarily travel to attend political meetings as they did in the past, but they express their views on issues, for example on the political party lines which are adopted or on more general political issues, with the help of the Internet and other tools provided by information and communication technology.

In this way, the younger generation who are conversant with information and communication technology can be enticed into exercising political influence at the beginning of the 21st century, and in the future – probably “surprisingly” soon – virtual influence may be the most widespread means by far of shaping the issues on the societal agenda among *all age groups*.

A sketchy description of what is happening:

- *The world of the past:* in years gone by, the parties tried to maximise the number of members and local constituency parties as well as the size of the party conferences, for example. Bigger meant better and more democratic, as in other aspects of the industrial age. This way of thinking is becoming old-fashioned.
- *The last political party of the industrial age, the Greens:* in Finland, the last political force to emerge from the industrial age is the Greens, who have always embraced a different kind of party model. The efficient use of modern communication technology has superseded a large membership and a heavy organisation, albeit only in part.
- *The future:* societal movements will come about, some of whom may resemble political parties, with the difference that they do not convene any physical meetings.

The traditional parties will take on some of the features of virtual parties, and before long wholly virtual parties will come into existence. For different non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), such virtual influence has already risen to become an important tool. In this way, they have been able to extend the geographical and societal dimension of their activities (for example, global actions in conjunction with major events around the world, such as meetings of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or the G8 group). New information and communication technology has already brought down the costs of activities and heightened the speed at which civil society works and the impact that it has.

For example, *Amnesty International* in its campaign against torture has been able to generate a worldwide avalanche of emails directed at carefully chosen targets in the space of a few hours.

Alternative Futures Associates uses the term “*swarm activism*” to describe *innovative and surprising activism which exists and exerts influences through virtual networks without there being any organised body to lead it in any way*. The networks of activists are loosely formed and can change quickly. For example, a number of years ago an email exchange between a student of MIT and the well-known manufacturer of sports shoes Nike made its way all around the world in the space of a few weeks. It raised broad awareness of the conditions in which workers in Nike factories outside of the United States were forced to work. The first high-profile “swarm actions” were the demonstrations at the WTO summit in Seattle in 1999. Since then, a number of similar expressions of opinion have been organised, including those in Genoa and Gothenburg.¹³³

Certain movements which have formed in the area of animal conservation may be considered another example of swarm activism. These operate as independent cells without any clear leadership, and maybe even without the people involved knowing anything about each other. This may stem from the awareness that they are also using clearly illegal methods.

Just as swarm phenomena can be achieved more efficiently and more quickly with the help of the Internet, inter alia *the security authorities* also use the Internet in monitoring these phenomena and nowadays in predicting and preparing for new situations, such as those major global meetings.

That the civil society movement should take on supranational dimensions is nothing new in itself. The movement against the Vietnam War, “the crazy year of 1968”; student radicalism, Woodstock, the hippie movement and the other 1960s movements were visible almost everywhere in the world thanks to modern mass media. *The difference lies in the speed, comprehensiveness and directionality in communication*. And partly in the subjects covered, of course.

The Internet and the other new technologies of the information society, such as mobiles, have increased the opportunities for people to create such phenomena quickly and globally. The opportunities are interactive and they are always “switched on”. Any individual “*swarm member*” can send out and receive signals in a worldwide *virtual swarm*, whenever and wherever.

Any one of us could launch a worldwide process of societal change right now. All we need is a computer, an Internet connection – and an idea between our ears.

Boundless virtual democracy. *Virtual democracy* may exert a radical effect on what was referred to as *arenas of activity* in the traditional geographical sense. Increasingly

intelligent information and communication technology will mean that the importance of national and other geographical boundaries and operational levels (arenas of activity) will decline in terms of societal influence.

In virtual space the concept of *place* as we have learnt to understand it will lose its significance; virtual space has no geographical spaces and boundaries. These boundaries will be replaced by a *virtual universe* or several of them. These will be arenas of activity, some smaller, some larger, where influence on societal development will be exercised in different ways, decisions and agreements will be made, business will be done, cultural interaction will take place, and games will be played. In the virtual world, there is also a different *concept of time*.

When young people, and in the future in all likelihood also older people, *play* Internet games – for example, adventure games, role plays or chess – it is of no relevance where on the globe each individual person is, whether Pekka is keeping himself going with coca cola in the evening, or Linda with a hamburger in the morning, etc. It is easy to downplay gaming cultures, but it is precisely gaming cultures that represent the most advanced technology and the culture that it enables.

The virtual tribes of players on the Internet are showing the way to economic and societal players. In job interviews in companies today, candidates are asked about how well they can play the popular Internet game *World of Warcraft (WoW)*. Games have also given rise to societal action, such as demonstrations against those maintaining the games.¹³⁴

The fascination of the virtual world is probably a surprise to the generations of today. It is full of universes, where everything is better than in “the real world”: people are good, women are beautiful, everything is available in abundance, the sex is better and you can always get it. I can be a genius, an Adonis, a king, even a talk show host, basically everything that today I can only dream of. “The real world, am I bovered¹³⁵!?”

It is considered that a global group that exists as a set of people interacting only on a virtual basis and that operates locally or has a religious or other ideological identity or at least mission is a *global virtual tribe* or even a *virtual nation*. For example, Sohail Inayatullah describes al-Qaeda as a virtual nation. In his view, *large multinational companies* also constitute virtual nations.¹³⁶

Inayatullah does not specify the criteria according to which one can talk of a virtual *nation* instead of a *tribe* with looser virtual interaction. One may think that such criteria are a high degree of similarity between members, the same interests and benefit to be gained from joining forces, if not a universal mission (religion or other strong ideology), a global nature that is not territory-specific and, of course, an ability to use modern information technologies. Whether we like it or not, al-Qaeda would appear to fulfil the criteria attached to being a virtual nation. A looser virtual tribe could be Greenpeace or Attac.

Microsoft or, for example, *Nokia* in this sense are at least global virtual tribes, if not virtual nations. The operations of these large global *economic* players are administered to an ever greater extent on a virtual, timeless and placeless basis. At any given time somewhere in the world, a large group of Nokia employees are conducting a joint *mis-*

sion, “connecting people”, as part of the cosy Nokia family, manufacturing and selling mobile phones. The *Nokia-Matrix* never sleeps.

In terms of societal influence, far more significant virtual tribes than those of individual companies can be formed by *joint virtual tribes of senior executives from such global companies*. They set out to influence economic and societal development – and they can be extremely successful in their efforts to do so.

One highly possible scenario is one in which *a high-ranking global elite of the most significant market forces will form a virtual nation with its own constitution, other systems of rules, decision-making bodies, organs exercising jurisdiction and a media, and that will dictate to inter alia societal players what decisions they should take*.

In the future, virtual tribes and nations will actively interact with each other and with traditional physical tribes and nations. This could involve cooperation, competition, tensions and conflicts. *On opposite sides in the “war on terrorism” being waged by the administration of George Bush, there is already a traditional territorial state (the United States and its allies) and a virtual nation (al-Qaeda)*.

Societal institutions and processes with their rituals and thus politics always change more slowly than technology and economy, but they change nonetheless. *Virtual nation, virtual state, v-EU, v-President* and the like are ideas that may be the subject of much discussion in the years to come. For example, the idea of a virtual nation may mean that in some matters “the municipality” is very much *local* in nature (for example, the child day-care centre has to be close to where people live), while in others it may be *broader* (the administration may be at district level: who needs a municipal director and a leader of the council anyway, and who would want him as a neighbour?); and in some matters extremely *universal* in nature (the top-notch mathematics pack used at school is virtual and may have been developed in many places around the world and its maintenance server can be anywhere). In the future, geographical boundaries between municipalities, states, regions and continents will start to appear artificial when it comes to a lot of issues.

Ideas of *virtual democracy* are just germinating and are provisional (so-called emerging issues) but their significance and the speed at which they develop may surprise us in the next few decades.

The possible effects of state-of-the-art technology in societal influence and decision-making

The Czech information technology expert Bohumir Stedron believes that

between 2010–2020 (The Age of Merging)

- In the most technologically advanced societies (United States, Germany, Japan, France, Ireland, Finland and China) all legislation will rely heavily on expert systems based on artificial intelligence.
- Intelligent computers and telecommunications networks will enable voice recognition to be exploited in directing 3-D Internet, radio and television, mobile telephones and various services.
- Intelligent computers and telecommunications networks will dominate pedagogical processes.

- The merging of information technologies, biotechnologies and nanotechnologies will lead to a merging of the fields of science that develop them.
- Direct connection between a person and the Internet will be possible thanks to chip implants (and later without the chips).
- New inventions will enable quantum- and DNA-computers as well as creating new materials (that do not contain intelligence).
- Virus protection programmes will be developed to avoid system crashes.
- New laws will be enacted with the aim of protecting people’s health from electromagnetic pollution, to regulate the use of domestic robots and to ensure more and more stringent data protection, etc.

between 2020–2030 (The Age of AI Self-Reliance):

- Intelligent computers and telecommunications networks will repair themselves and will steer scientific research and production processes.
- New materials that contain a high level of intelligence will be devised.
- Chip implants will enable direct contacts between people and computers (possible later without chips).
- Some robots will be granted statutory human rights.

between 2030–2040 (The Non-Mysterious Age)

- A new holographic model of the world will replace the geometric model.
- Artificial intelligence-based systems will extract holographic data from the environment.
- Explanations will be found to mysterious phenomena such as extrasensory perception and energy fields.
- With the help of artificial intelligence, the intelligence of any person at all will be able to be copied; a need will arise for legislation to protect and regulate these copies.¹³⁷

The scales of democracy – globalisation and localisation

The possibility of democratic global governance

The jurisdiction of democratic governments has expanded significantly. Wendell Bell: “For the most part, from 500 BC to the 1600-1700 AD it was generally felt that democratic and republican ideas and practices are applied in only small units, above all in city states.”¹³⁸ As late as in 1787, when the drafters of the American constitution came together to plan a democratic system “for a representative democracy that would have to govern a huge and also expanding area”, many of the “representatives ... were well aware of the fact that what they were trying to achieve flew in the face of conventional wisdom.”¹³⁹ New institutions were needed, of course: a legislative body composed of elected representatives, political parties, a wide variety of organisations (for example, interest groups). Furthermore, there was a need for change in attitudes, beliefs and the ethos of the nation, and for a political culture that would recognise both citizens and leaders.¹⁴⁰

A striking feature of modern globalisation is the fact that it is taking place at different rates: economy and technology have been strongly globalised for a long time. The whole world is the home market of a global economy dominated by major companies. As was said above, the science on which the whole of modern development is based has always been universal. On the other hand, a system for establishing a moral code for society on a world scale, i.e. *democratic global governance*, is woefully underdeveloped.

Among futures researchers, the enhanced role for the *supranational* levels, such as the European Union, in the future has been a key subject of discussion for decades already. The same also applies to the idea that in the longer term it will be justified, credible and natural to talk of *world governance*. Whether the enhanced global governance that may emerge over the next 100 years will be democratic or not is a matter for different scenarios to address.

The idea of the democratic governance of globalisation has gradually become part of the plan of action for civil society organisations, parliamentary players and (nation) state governments. The Committee for the Future of the Finnish Parliament arranged an invitation seminar on 13 October 2004 under the heading “*The challenge of global democracy – has the time come to develop the parliamentary dimension of global governance?*” In the speech on the Helsinki Process that he delivered at the seminar, Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja pointed out that ensuring the representativeness and equality of global decision-making is a key challenge for the international community and that the Finnish government has made a commitment in its report on security and defence policy to promoting initiatives concerning the governance of globalisation in EU policy. In his view, new players and new methods, such as international taxes, are needed for the governance of globalisation.¹⁴¹

The various features of globalisation, including the relationship between economy, democracy and the possibilities offered by globalisation, have been examined in numerous books.¹⁴² One of the best-known critics of globalisation in recent years has been Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, in his book *Globalization and its Discontents*.¹⁴³ A more positive attitude towards globalisation – on the proviso that politics is able to address people’s concerns regarding inter alia the environment, the status of women and democracy – has been taken by Indian-American professor Jagdish Bhagwati, whose book *In Defence of Globalization* was published in 2004.¹⁴⁴ A multifaceted examination of the subject by Finns is provided by *Kohti globaalivastuuta (Towards Global Responsibility)* by Paula Tiihonen and Seppo Tiihonen.¹⁴⁵ Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen examine in their book *Gloaali demokratia (Global Democracy)* both the reform of existing institutions and the creation of new institutions in the promotion of global democracy.¹⁴⁶

One of the most important research projects assessing the future from the global perspective is the *Millennium Project*.¹⁴⁷ It has produced the State of the Future report annually for a number of years. The reports, which describe the development contours and challenges for the future, are based on worldwide expert surveys. The 15 global challenges in the 2006 State of the Future report are: (italics by the author):

1. How can *sustainable development* for all be ensured?
2. How can everyone get sufficient *clean water* without conflicts?

3. How can a balance be struck between *population growth* and *resources*?
4. How can genuine *democracies* develop out of authoritarian administrations?
5. How can policy-making be made more sensitive than it is today to the *long-term global perspective*?
6. How can globalisation and the *convergence* of information and communication technologies be made to serve every person on the globe?
7. How can *ethical markets* be encouraged to narrow the divide between the rich and poor?
8. How can the threat caused by newly emerging *diseases* and immune micro-organisms be reduced?
9. How can the *ability to make decisions* be improved as the nature of work and institutions change?
10. How can shared *values* and new *security strategies* be used to reduce ethnic conflicts and prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction?
11. How can the living conditions of the human race be improved through changes in the *status of women*?
12. How can we prevent *organised crime* from becoming an ever more influential and sophisticated global activity?
13. How can a growing need for energy be satisfied safely and efficiently?
14. How can *scientific and technological breakthroughs* be accelerated in order to improve human living conditions?
15. How can *ethical reviews* be made a routine part of global decisions?¹⁴⁸

What all these challenges more or less have in common is the fact that achieving the objectives associated with them may be difficult without *more powerful democratic global governance*. The situation at the beginning of the new millennium is typified by *a gulf between strengthening and centralising global market forces, the influence of the global financial economy and, on the other hand, underdeveloped supranational societal systems*.

Worth a special mention is *how to solve global environmental issues, in particular addressing climate change, managing the planet's strategic resources, such as non-renewable natural resources, in the future, population growth, economic development gaps, flagrant violations of human rights, the stability of the global economy and global security*. Furthermore, the reasons behind many regional phenomena, such as the felling of the rain forests, are associated with globalisation, which means that effective solutions require a global perspective.

As the Millennium list reveals, in addition to the phenomena traditionally understood to be global in nature, there are other reasons to strengthen democratic global governance. The development of information and communication technology needs globalisation, which it has at the same time greatly advanced. Up and coming technologies operate according to the same logic: biotechnologies and material and nanotechnologies. When the most advanced areas of the world possibly shifts from the information age into the bio-age, it will mean at the same time that the world will become ever more complicated and global.

The need for a global rule book to be established is also relevant when so-called developing countries in the future claim their fair share of the fruits of economic prosperity. This will not be achieved through protectionism, but rather through global governance within a framework of a jointly agreed set of rules. Nor will fair and functioning global governance be possible if billions of people have no speaking or voting rights in that global governance.

Effective agents for laying down the ground rules for society and economy that operate at the level of the nation state do not exist at the global level. Regional alliances, such as the European Union, are just developing in this respect and are still heavily focused on the nation state. For its part, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) does not enjoy broad democratic legitimacy in the world and operates in too narrow an area to be able to meet the need for governance of the global economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are not representative of global democracy. International agreements, such as the Kyoto Climate Change Protocol, which inter alia the United States did not sign, achieve imperfect global governance even at best. The UN has been weak and outdated for a long time already.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps the most significant wielder of global power of our times, the G8 meetings of economic superpowers, represents the narrow interests of their members.

The position of *nation states* has declined as globalisation has gained ground.¹⁵⁰ Their traditional tools of influence have lost their impact or have ceased to exist. Membership of the European Union restricts the possibilities at the level of the state for independent legislation and policies in terms of, for example, commercial policy, regional policy, taxation, etc. Joining EMU took away the possibility of devaluations, which had previously been crucial to Finnish economic policy.

Globalisation and the new mechanisms of global governance have transferred political decision-making at the national level to an increasing extent to the regional and global level; states have been integrated into global and regional systems of governance. Supranational regional governance organisations increasingly negotiate amongst themselves and thus form a collective group of players at the level of global governance. For example, David Held considers that governments will be marginalised and lose their positions and ability to govern unless they are integrated into the national political system. *Globalisation poses a tough challenge for national democracy and, unless global issues can be brought within the scope of political governance, national democracy will also suffer.*¹⁵¹

Democratic global governance can be considered desirable, and even as indispensable as going down the path of ecologically sustainable development in the long term. However, the process will probably take decades and will require a great many chang-

es. Brand-new models for exercising democracy are needed at global level. These need to concentrate only on the most important issues at the global level – the necessity for the so-called *subsidiarity principle* to be applied.¹⁵² While changes are slow to come about and – as we have observed when different cultural circles have clashed in recent times – backward steps are also possible in the development of global governance, one can safely say that the current world order cannot go on for long without major changes.

Paula Tiihonen and Seppo Tiihonen highlight the following considerations in their assessment of the possibilities and future development of global governance:

- Global governance has to concentrate on solving the most pressing global problems that are responsible for humanity being caught up a spiral of worsening crises. In developed countries, terrorism is currently considered the worst problem of all and is a problem stemming from other global problems, such as poverty, lack of democracy and lack of reform in the Arab world. Solutions to global problems presuppose sustainable operating models. These need political leadership, the guidance of the global market and the influence those acting for global humanity, such as civil society organisations.
- In Finnish terms, it is crucial to note that the enlargement of the EU increases both Europe's and Finland's global responsibility.
- Global governance cannot be built to rely on traditional political machinery and authorities. Attention will have to be paid to non-state actors and the expertise of companies in constructing a global market and a global society.
- One of the biggest challenges to future global governance is making room for credible market self-regulation and for participation for humanity that represents the whole of the global population.
- The rapidly growing population of developing countries cannot be saved from poverty on the strength of development aid. Markets and trade need to be opened. Developing countries have to be brought within the scope of the market system.
- Global ethics are also crucial. People have to be aware that they belong to one and the same human race.
- The equation of poverty, inequality and lack of democracy can be solved only by changing the balance of power between intergovernmental organisations.
- Economic debate has reflected on the future of global international market governance on the basis of experience gained from it, and many researchers have their doubts about the possibility of ongoing integration.¹⁵³

Tiihonen – Tiihonen put forward five basic models for global governance:¹⁵⁴

1. *Liberalist global governance*, where globalisation shifts the focal point of governance to the market and society. Governance is bottom-up networking and its focus shifts from intergovernmental bodies to non-state actors. The role of states shrinks substantially. Even though liberalist principles have been applied in many developed industrial countries for a long time at national level, extending their application to the international level should be a radical change. It is hard to imagine that, if international relations are hegemonically governed by one superpower, that non-state actors from the same state would be divorced from that cultural background. Furthermore, doubts about the ability to separate the interests of one's own company from those of global governance add to the problems with this model. A situation of multilateral cooperation provides the best conditions for the model to function. The problem with a free market is the fact that the market best serves the cause of large companies and organised interests. We know that the strongest companies are in industrialised countries.
The liberalist model is the most challenging of all and the only one that is genuinely based on a new kind of governance concept. However, achieving it seems utopian in a world in which so many countries lack basic state institutions. A liberalist global society is a distant dream which cannot come true for as long as billions of people are without national democracy and adequate human rights.
2. *Carry on the way we are now: state cooperation and intergovernmental organisations*; in this model national governments are expected to defend national democracy, the interests of which are more important than global democracy, and states do not wish to relinquish their sovereignty. Key players are the governments of the different countries and intergovernmental organisations that do not operate independently but rather under the guidance and leadership of their member states. The model does not require new organisations to be set up; instead, it is enough to improve the old operating methods. The model represents stability and is the safe choice in terms of democracy. Tiihonen – Tiihonen believe that this model will continue in the short term rather than the first model being implemented.
3. *Combination of governance and governing : cooperation between private and public players*, in which states, multinational organisations, market operators and civil society organisations participate broadly in global governance. The model includes democracy and direct participation. The success of the model depends on how much interest civil society and economic operators have in global issues. The model works successfully and efficiently when cooperation between states is based on trust and the balance of power. The cooperation model offers opportunities to construct new forms of cooperation, which is not possible in the other models. Tiihonen – Tiihonen believe that this model

is the concrete way of opening up scope for a new brand of global governance over time and of taking us towards the first model. The preconditions for this model to be achieved are pretty much in place and it has been under development for a long time.

4. *International organisations based on the global interest*: under this model, global problems can only be solved with the help of global federalism and by preventing the influence of national and geographically restricted interests in global decision-making. The model seems rather utopian because all global governance arrangements to date have been set up in fulfilment of national interests. On the other hand, the model is wholly possible in the long term. While the model is by nature democratic, it bypasses the requirements of national and international democracy. The model may generate a system in which representatives of different continents and fields of science detach themselves from national connections to resolve conflicts and to represent the “objective” interests of the globe.
5. *Return to the past: safeguarding national interests alone and under one’s own steam*; in this model global cooperation is limited to bilateral cooperation between states. Large states have the best opportunities to pursue their own interests, so the model is problematic from the perspective of democracy. Tiihonen – Tiihonen consider the probability of the unilateral approach being implemented currently as low, since multilateral cooperation between states has established itself over decades as the basic model of supranational cooperation. The return to the unilateral model seems excessive and like a backward step in the long run, even though there is demand for unilateralism. From the point of view of global governance, the fear of unilateralism is greater than that of some small countries falling outside the scope of global governance. A discussion of principle is currently underway in the United States on global governance from the perspective of safeguarding national interests and the unilateralist approach. It has been suggested that national interests may require withdrawal from international agreements that place restrictions on national sovereignty. Many bilateral agreements between states are currently being used.

Tiihonen – Tiihonen consider the last two models to be theoretically possible, and movement in their direction may go without awareness if no opposition towards them is forthcoming.

Global civil society

A worldwide civil society (demos) sounds like a distant dream and an abstract idea. However, without the ideal of a global civil society creating a genuine global democracy will not be possible.

According to Patomäki and Teivainen, new organisations that have come out or will come out of political initiatives to reinforce *global civil society* are:

- *The World Social Forum*; WSF is the first serious attempt to join political forces to create a common space where background work on issues can take place and collective action to bring about change can be planned. It came about to act as a counterweight to the World Economic Forum.
- *The Global Truth Commission*; a forum in which open and democratic discussion can be held on injustices past and present. However, so far all initiatives to set up the Global Truth Commission have been rather sketchy and thus not practicable.
- *The World Parliament*, the construction of which would perhaps be the most traditional and in conceptual terms the most direct way of democratising the world order. Even though this idea has been bandied around by many people, Patomäki – Teivainen point out that we should not rush into setting up a World Parliament or any other comparable body. In their opinion, the project could go down the road of global debate and referendum, whereby a statistically representative sample of the world's citizens would be asked their views of issues surrounding global democratisation.¹⁵⁵
- *International debt clearance mechanism*. Foreign debt is one of the main obstacles to the emergence of genuine democratic will also at global level. A debt intervention mechanism in line with the general principle of legality would reduce debt dependence and would improve in particular the possibilities for third world countries to implement an independent economic policy and reforms on their own terms.
- *Worldwide taxes*: There are clear historical and conceptual links between taxation and democracy, and many initiatives have been launched to establish global taxation. The most important taxes would include a currency exchange tax, a pollution tax and a telecommunications tax. Considerable revenue would be generated from these taxes and they could be channelled into a global fund, which in turn could direct funds to debt management and to coming up with new sources of financing, etc. It would reduce state dependence on the Bretton Woods organisation. It would be possible to use a fraction of the funds to democratise the UN. For its part, the tax on pollution could help in solving the worldwide environment problem.¹⁵⁶

The aforementioned ideas to reinforce global civil society are important. However, it should be remembered that the WSF is only one civil society forum and does not speak on behalf of the whole of global civil society. (Similarly, the World Economic Forum is not the exclusive mouthpiece of the global economy). In spite of its good intentions, the Global Truth Commission is problematic in many respects. For example, it may be asked how this could be achieved so that it generates real benefit in terms of improving conditions for disadvantaged nations in difficult situations and is prevented from becoming a one-sided propaganda body.

The *Global Democracy: Civil Society Visions and Strategies (G05) Conference* in Montreal in 2005 discussed the following five principles of democratic global governance:

- Global institutions and agendas should be brought within democratic political responsibility.
- At global level, democratic politics requires legitimacy granted by citizen monitoring through representative and direct mechanisms.
- Participation of citizens in decision-making at global level requires equal opportunities for all the people of the world.
- The many spheres of influence, from the local to the district, national, regional and global, should mutually support the democratisation of decision-making at all levels.
- Global public commodities (peace and security, basic education and healthcare, clean water and air, food and human rights) should be within reach of all citizens of the world in an equitable manner.¹⁵⁷

The importance of civil movements and organisations – [T]NGOs ([transnational] non-governmental organisations), CSOs (civil society organisations) – to the development of global democracy in the future may be great. Civil movements – unlike hierarchical state actors and giant companies – represent values and ambitions coming directly from citizens and thus from the grassroots level. These are no more restricted by geographical or state boundaries than they are by the walls between the roles of societal organisations and economic operators. Civil movements are able to sense people's needs and they can promote increasingly important *global ethics*. Their sensitivity to what is important in people's relations with each other and, for example, the environment, as well as their networking and speed of action make many civil movements very creative and future-oriented; in the language of futures researchers, they can be considered to promote out of possible futures, the ones which people think are worth striving for. The movements do not simply follow a distant idea of the future; instead, they are working to make the world a better place here and now.

As for the traditional official institutions in society, they are hierarchical with a top-down orientation, and the administrative elite can lead its own life distanced from what is going on at grassroots level and be oblivious to the societal needs and innovations being developed by civil society organisations. They often represent social preferences defined in the past and they change slowly.

Civil movements serve as forerunners that generate pressure at grassroots level on slow-moving national and supranational representative societal players, such as the Finnish Parliament and government and, for example, the institutions of the European Union, to make decisions that reflect the views of citizens.

Civil movements can be considered to exert an important influence on market forces. The interests of global market forces are defined by the narrow interests of their owners and, in today's world more often than not, international financial investors. Because democratic global governance is underdeveloped, global market forces have

been able to act selfishly in many areas, caring relatively little for the future, the environment and people. Civil movements could highlight the societal injustices that are a consequence of this.

Of course, there are many kinds of civil movements, some extremely local and representing narrow interests, others pursuing universal ambitions at global level. We should not be naive: there are also selfish, narrow-minded and undemocratic civil movements. It should also be remembered that those operating in traditional institutions, such as the parties, as slow and dull as they are, have nonetheless received their mandate legitimately in democratic elections, at least in countries such as Finland.

The importance of civil society movements should not be understated, but nor should it be overstated. For example, Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) are carrying out a great deal of work worldwide, as too are those movements campaigning against landmines and to protect dolphins from the tuna industry. On the other hand, countless local movements are important, such as the microcredit movement, which has brought about a great deal of development through small loans to women, or many other movements launched by women in so-called developing countries, for example the “Rwandan Widows” and the “Mothers of Uganda” movements, which work to protect children.¹⁵⁸

However, such movements exert a modest influence compared to the power wielded by, for example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and, on the other hand, such large companies as Coca Cola, Nestle or AOL Time Warner. Civil movements may generate pressure, but they cannot dictate the actions of major institutional players.

World governance of many cultures

Something normative can be claimed about the future of global governance: *the desired future of global governance cannot be based on the unilateralism of the state level, which can be considered as something of a dystopia.* The ambitions of the current US administration come close to the idea that it has the exclusive right to govern the whole world, which will be an unsustainable model of global governance in the future.¹⁵⁹

In the highly globalised world of today, another scenario that lacks credibility is the one in which states would safeguard the basic conditions of human life for their citizens in a protectionist manner within national boundaries. Political influence has already shifted to such an extent from national politics to the global stage that a reversal is unlikely.

Democratic global governance in the future will scarcely amount to a world government or global parliament – in the next few decades, such institutional development will scarcely take place and *in the longer term global democracy may well be achieved more intelligently with the help of new technology, rather than by establishing parliaments and other old-fashioned institutions.*¹⁶⁰ Global development may advance at least through the conclusion of ever more numerous and more binding agreements on important global issues, for example the use of key natural resources, improving the state of the environment and ecologically sustainable development, a set of just ground rules for the world economy, etc. The players will not be just the parliaments and gov-

ernments but also local and global civil society organisations, companies, the UN and, for example, the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The development of a global civil society is a distant ideal, but at the same time it is a process that is already in progress.¹⁶¹

In the foreseeable future, different societal governance models will live side by side, exerting influence on each other. The western emphasis on the individual with the right to self-determination, which has its roots in Ancient Greece, will be constantly interacting with the societal models of eastern culture (China, Japan, Korea, etc). In the latter examples, there is an emphasis on central leadership and collectivism, to which the individual is subordinated.

In Ancient China, the subject was completely at the mercy of the emperor, and the leaders of the Communist Party and the local authorities are in a similar position today at the beginning of the 21st century. China in the early 21st century is a communist dictatorship. China restricts the basic rights of its citizens in a way which is not at all acceptable from the perspective of western democracy. It is possible that not even in the supra-long time perspective of this report, i.e. up to 2107, will there develop a society representing western values of democracy. When talking about deep cultural change, a hundred years is a short time. Especially if there is no desire for change. Even the governors of Ancient Greece allowed the kind of democratic dialogue which cannot be said to exist in the China of today.

Democracy is always a threat to authoritarian administrations

There are so many cultures and societies to which the western concept of democracy is unfamiliar, and where this could still be the case in a hundred years' time, that a few examples are enough to demonstrate the kind of rivals that exist to democracy and the kind of threat that democracy constitutes to authoritarian regimes, be they religious or secular. Iran's constant intimidation of the international community and the strongly worded religio-military speeches of its president – in 2005 he announced that the state of Israel should be wiped off the world map – are an indication that the current leadership of the country is not interested in the opinions of the international community. The supremacy of narrow-minded religious sentiment in society is a familiar story in many other Muslim nations, including the oil ally of the United States, Saudi Arabia, whose system of society is far from the idea of democracy.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many newly independent nations have rapidly developed into pure dictatorships, of which Belarus and Turkmenistan may be cited as examples. The human rights situation in Turkey, which is applying for EU membership, is behind all the fine words extremely bad according to the wealth of information to come out of the country, including from civil society organisations.

As has already been said, China is a communist dictatorship. The same is true of its neighbour, North Korea. Beyond the difference in the size of the population and the economy, the key difference between these countries is the fact that China is striving to open up to the world, while at this point in time North Korea is perhaps the most closed country in the world. In a globalising world, the following view may appear strange: it is possible that the North Korean model is more sustainable in the long term

than the Chinese model. China's communist leadership has opened its doors to international influences, and it is not credible for the Communist Party to be able to suppress the democratic rights of its citizens indefinitely. The student uprising in 1989 was symptomatic of things to come. On the other hand, North Korea is such a closed prison that the leadership of the country could pursue its policy of total opinion control for decades to come. Not even famine appears to be able to get the downtrodden citizens of the country to revolt.

And what about Russia? Using various freedom indicators – including freedom of expression, freedom of association, compliance with the law, the autonomy and the rights of the individual – worldwide observer Freedom House relegated Russia in 2004 to the category of *not free states*, the lowest in its three-category system, the other categories being *free* and *partly free* countries. Freedom to express opinions and the freedom to act enjoyed by civil society organisations were restricted by the new Russian law on organisations. In early 2006 civil society organisations were worried about the conditions under which they were operating. For example, in February the Russian freedom of speech organisation PEN got into difficulties. Its assets were frozen on the due to alleged tax irregularities.

The law gives the authorities the right to close down an organisation without a court ruling if an official considers that its activities are not in line with its purpose. Organisations can be shut down by invoking rather vague reasons, such as conserving Russia's cultural heritage and national interest. Associations with limited resources, such as Greenpeace, are being required inter alia to report on their cash flow on a monthly basis. Because it is worded in such imprecise terms, there are fears that the law on civil society organisations will allow the Russian practice of bribery to continue as well as others forms of arbitrary rule.

The official reason for restricting the activities of civil society organisations is counter-terrorism. However, many critics of the law on organisations suspect that the real reason is fear on the part of the Putin administration of an "Orange Revolution" along the lines of the one seen in Ukraine.

A real civil society has never been formed in Russia. The ruling class in Russia has always been suspicious of it and has felt it to be opposed to the power of the state and a threat to Russia from the outside world. Russia's development since 2006 cannot be described as going down the road of rule of law and civil society.

It is only just emerging what practices will be adopted by the authorities, but from the point of view of civil society and its organisation, the future does not look bright. For example, the organisation *Mothers of Soldiers*, which defends conscripts against the despotism of the army, was greatly concerned about its situation in February 2006. A *Greenpeace* representative has described developments in Russia as a move towards totalitarianism.

When the G8 countries met in July 2006 in St Petersburg, several hundred Russian civil activists were arrested during the weekend in St Petersburg and around the country. Those arrested included a number of foreign activists. Sufficient grounds for arrest included crossing a road in red, urinating in the street and handing out fliers. The authorities had announced in advance that demonstrations were outlawed and that journalists reporting them could be arrested.

Developing civil society is an extremely slow process, even once that process has kicked off. By 2017 Russian civil society may be underdeveloped at best.

The construction of an independent civil society in Finland has been underway since 1917 – and also during the period of autonomy ahead of independence. However, even in the 21st century the atmosphere in society is still marked by features of a subject society – hatred and fear of the powers-that-be and at the same time a desire for such powers and a will to submit.

It may be asked if indeed *Europe will be the region in the future* where different cultural and societal models will come together and where the first genuine experiences of democratic supranational governance will be gained. There are tensions in Europe between local, national and federalist aspirations. The European Union interest will not always coincide with the Finnish interest, and vice versa. Norway, Switzerland and other European countries outside of the EU have their own interests. Finnish places such as Åland, Kauniainen and Pelkosenniemi have their own separate identities, and these may be asserted in the future.

In addition to regional differences, cultural diversity also typifies Europe. Alongside the spectrum of nationalities, Europe will function more and more clearly as a mosaic, with influences from many non-European cultures, such as Russia, Muslim cultures and the cultures of the Far East. The United States, described as “a melting pot of nationalities”, may in the future be a more uniform state compared to the broad range of regions, cultures and inter alia languages that is Europe.

The ideologisation of the future?

The development of the information society lacks ideological energy because the societal players of today were born in a bygone era, and the new players are still shapeless and scattered and will perhaps stay like that.

Political delay. Modern society is home to the technology and the economy of a globalising information society, but its party-political map, which resembles a set of interest groups, and its societal institutions, administration and a political culture, which rely on the rationale of the nation state, are the product of agrarian and industrial society. The current party-political map was born out of the key issues of its day, such as pursuing the interests of the peasantry and the tensions between labour and capital. All the parties are clearly characterised by the sovereignty of the nation state and the concept of democracy associated with it: “the Finnish X ...”, “the Finnish Y ...” or “the National Z ...”.

The last political movement to have been a product of the industrial age, and which became a more long-lasting party, is *the Greens*, which can be considered to have been generated by the tension between industrial society and the environment. The claim that the Greens are the last significant movement of industrial society is based above all on the idea that *the Greens politicised environmental problems*, which industrial society had given rise to.¹⁶² The ideologisation of the information society is still only in its infancy, even though the information society has been gaining momentum for the last thirty years.¹⁶³ The chronological order is important here: *environmental problems found their way onto the political agenda before issues of the information society*.

Today's parties, which were born of the conditions of their day, find themselves confronted by issues which at the time of their foundation were not instrumental in their establishment or in distinguishing them. Of the big societal issues of recent years, attitudes to EU membership and to nuclear power could be mentioned as examples of issues which have divided parties internally. The same may be said about the development of the information society as a whole: the parties that were born in agrarian-industrial society have received the information society in much the same confused way – including the last of these, the Greens.

Another consequence of this has been that *it seems as though* the ideological differences between the parties have shrunk. The political programmes of the parties have begun to resemble each other, but the change has not necessarily happened at the ideological level. It is more a case of the way issues are framed in modern society having blurred the differences between the original ideologies. In practice, the socio-economic development of recent decades may also have had the effect that less ideological policy-making has been practised in the parties because it has seemed that it was no longer needed. It may be that not all the members of the Centre Party in Finland would pass a thorough exam on the ideas of its founder Santeri Alkio, that the party secretary of the Social Democratic Party has not got round to reading *Das Kapital* by Marx, and the members of the Coalition Party may need to jog their memories somewhat to be able to tell us what Smith and Popper taught us. A decade or two ago, these matters were studied actively in discussion groups in people's homes and in study circles.

What has been said above – that society has changed, but not the ideological starting-points of the parties – is of great importance for gaining a feel for the future of democracy and the parties in the future in the long term. Ideas about sharpening the ideological profiles of the parties that are mooted from time to time by party leaders and political scientists will scarcely produce success stories.

When talking about parties and ideologies, which have been spawned by tensions in the world of the past, refining and polishing party programmes produces ideologically sharp solutions to problems which for the most part are no longer relevant. In order to transform themselves into genuine political players in a globalising information society and world, the parties need to adopt such radical solutions that these are scarcely possible other than through crises. If this were to happen, it would be a case of new parties coming into existence, rather than old parties being reformed.

Political delay:
Political parties change more slowly
than economy and technology.

Even though the oldest of the modern parties are just one hundred years old, scarcely one of them will still exist in one hundred years' time.

It has been learnt from the logic behind the development of systems created by humankind – be they societal, economic or other – that *changes are gradual during stable development stages*; in Finland the project to construct an industrial welfare society in the 1950s and 1960s may be considered a trend-like and stable phase, marked by strong economic growth. Giving the old ideological shield a polish worked back then. For as long as we were living in the industrial society phase, it was enough for the old ideologies of the industrial era to be updated every so many years through new policy programmes.

For example, the Canadian futures researcher Ruben Nelson considers that the most important democracy-related issue of the new millennium will be whether or not western societies will be capable of substantial and historical cultural redefinition within their societal models, and will efforts to create new versions of old models go on indefinitely.¹⁶⁴ It might be possible to talk about a *paradigmatic transition* from the democracy models of the industrial age to those of the globalising information age.

When structures break down, trends are broken and (almost) everything changes. In technology and economy the structural transition from the industrial society to the information society is well underway. However, when it comes to the development dynamics of society and politics, changes are normally slower but they still take place, and before long new ways of thinking and players for the globalising information society start to surface in politics as well. *The political delay comes to an end.*

If the cards on the societal table of the modern age could be freely dealt once again, many things would change radically. It is wishful thinking to imagine that information, of which there is more than ever before in the information society despite all the fuss, would eliminate conflicts of interest between people. Diverging values, disparate interests, attitudes and ambitions have not disappeared; *on the contrary, there are more of them than ever before.* Multiculturalism has brought with it, and continues to do so, new values, lifestyles, attitudes towards e.g. the position of men and women, religious and non-religious ideologies, concepts of democracy and power, etc. The direct confrontation of large groups in society has decreased as the classes have been fragmented into small groups (tribes), but the differing interests have not vanished, they have become more diverse.

Diverging values and interests between people will not even disappear in the theoretical situation of everyone being fully informed of everything and understanding it.

However, replacing the industrial societal system with the globalising information society based on ecologically sustainable development requires *a new ideological mindset*. The construction project of the industrial society with its pretty much unchanged ideologies, which has lasted for decades and several generations, has come to an end. It falls to the current generation to sketch out the new ideologies, societal movements and ways of acting as the information society and its successors are being constructed.

In the same way that the industrial society gave rise to the major ideas of liberalism, conservatism and socialism, the information society needs its own ideologies. Karl Marx wrote his book *Das Kapital* in primitive industrial society in the 19th century; in the information society of the 21st century, he could chat on his Internet blog about *Die Informazione*.

It was said above that the parties scarcely take it upon themselves to undertake the structural changes that are needed in the technological base of society and in economy. They do not even want such changes because they have too much to lose: status, influence, positions of office and the like.

A fitting example of this is provided by just how tightly the parties cling to the positions that they have already achieved is the *non-application of the proportionality principle* in the Finnish parliamentary election system. Even though it may be stated incontrovertibly that the current model favours the major parties, no changes are taking place. The major parties are not compromising their own positions, but rather consider that they are entitled to a larger share of the seats in Parliament than their share of the votes at the elections would give them. Another example is furnished by *political appointments*, of which a number have been made in Finland in recent years.

If some external force were to dismantle the prevailing party system but had to leave everything else unchanged – the level of technology, education, etc – the consequence would be that the party-political map in a society with cards dealt anew would look quite different from how it looks at the moment. It is more than likely that societal movements and organisations would emerge, as well as societal conflicts of interest. The party-political map would probably be *more scattered* than it is now, because there will no longer be large uniform groups whose cause the large mass parties were created to fight.

However, this does not mean that the new movements created as the information society evolves would not be based on people's different schemes of values, interest and to a greater or lesser extent on strict *ideological solutions* which compete with one another. The history of ideologies did not end with the evolutionary victory of liberal democracy over communism after all, as Francis Fukuyama was quick to say more than fifteen years ago.

Ideologies and societal decision-making in the future are undoubtedly also issues on which futures researches, political analysts, politicians and economists have been particularly helpless to act. We have been harping on for at least 20 years about how “direct democracy is advancing”, “civil society is gaining momentum” and “representative democracy is heading for crisis”. However, the political decision-making and the running of the administration happen in much the same way as they did decades ago. The same political parties put (the same) candidates up for election held at intervals laid down by law. People vote by writing the number of a candidate or the words “Donald Duck” in pencil on a card. The parties receive more or less the same level of support from one election to the next. Fluctuations are slight and the whole situation predictable.

The economy is sexy – could politics even be interesting?

If politics feels boring and drab in Finland and speeches by politicians seem flowery but do not say anything, perhaps it is just because that is how it is. What is lacking in politics is critical and public justification and argument about values and ambitions. Politics has lost its appeal because it is depoliticised.

– Kostiainen – Vadén – Välimäki 2003

Is economy in itself the leading ideology of the new millennium? So many exciting changes are seen to take place in the economy that buzz words come and go every few years. The economy is an interesting and sexy subject, *an ideology in itself*. The economy exerts a far stronger pull on gifted and ambitious young people than the work of political parties, which is felt to be dull and old-fashioned.

At the turn of the millennium, almost every would-be guru appearing at seminars and in the financial press raved about the miracle of the “*new economy*”? Journalist Olli Manninen wrote about “*the revolution of the new economy*” in 2000 in his book, the first chapter of which was entitled: “*Visionaries rock*”. The chapter began as follows: “They are the rock stars of our age. Their opinions, what they do and their private lives are subject to constant media scrutiny. Tabloid newspapers, serious newspapers, financial papers, television talk shows and radio discussion programmes are thirsting for success stories about business miracles who have made their first million and who until very recently were nerds working in the corners of garages.” Manninen compares the importance of these gurus in economy to punk rock in the 1970s and the subsequent new wave that “brought down the conventional way of performing, producing and popularising rock music”.¹⁶⁵

The basic claim of the “*new economy*” cult is that the whole logic behind economy has changed. In some mysterious way, nerds under thirty – and the odd one under forty was allowed in too – had acquired the secret wisdom of the new economic logic.

What does that sort of talk display if not burning conviction? The parties would do well to take a look in their ideological mirrors: “When did the group working on our party programme last speak of revolution? Did the secretary of the working group rock at the last meeting?”

Only a few years down the line, the concept of the “*new economy*” had been forgotten and a new mantra had been born, “*the creative economy*”, the most well-known name behind which was Richard Florida.¹⁶⁶ It is worth saying a few words about this concept because it sparked a moment of ideological ardour. The basic idea of Florida, a geographer, about the importance of creativity to economic development and the development of knowledge capital in tolerant urban areas (for example, the San Francisco area) is sound and had cropped up in debates on the information society on many occasions in different ways before he came along. On the other hand, the term “*creative class*” that Florida coined is dated, misleading and offensive to those that built the industrial society.¹⁶⁷ Contemporary society, and even more so the society of the future, is not composed of rigid classes but rather of small and varied *tribes*, the boundaries between which are low and constantly changing.

It has long been considered that the importance of the immaterial content of the information society, such as knowledge, expertise, creativity, communications, culture, networking, quality, ethics and aesthetics, has always simply been greater. This applies to the input and output end of economic production and all the infrastructure, marketing and logistics that surround it. And, of course, to the whole of society that surrounds the economy. For example, renowned Swedish futures researcher Professor Åke Andersson wrote back in the 1980s about the K-society of the future, which includes four main ideas, all of which begin with a 'k' in Swedish: *kunskap* (knowledge), *kreativitet* (creativity), *kommunikation* (communication) and *kultur* (culture).

In economic debate there is a need for buzz words provided that one is not blinded by the hype surrounding each one. *The new economy, the attention economy, the creative economy, the gossip economy, the significance economy* and the rest are not to be decried if they inspire people to find the hero within, to embrace an enriching culture and blossom and to do good things. It is actually touching that creativity strategies are being drawn up in a consensus country such as Finland. Let the pop stars of the future, the Nightwishes and Ville Valos (HIM), read the committee reports. *Creativity is almost always a good thing!*

From the perspective of societal debate, democracy and the ideology politics of the future, there are grounds for asking: is that all there is? There is nothing intrinsically bad about the economy being sexy. But economy is not democratic and a company is by definition an exceptionally selfish creature.

Should it be a source of concern to party leaders and others interested in *what is happening in democratic society* that no one talks about *new politics, creative politics, attention politics and significance politics*? Not even those that coin buzz words are interested in politics.¹⁶⁸

In the media, the publication of Nokia's quarterly report is far bigger news than the adoption of a new policy programme by a large party. The problem lies partly in the programmes themselves, which you need a magnifying glass to find the innovations in.

What is the ideological content of economy? "Buy more!" as a successful bargain electrical goods chain has emblazoned across its walls for customers who are already leaving the check-outs?

Would a participatory democracy develop out of a participatory economy?

In quite recent times the concept of a *participatory economy* has been used as a kind of new version of the *new economy* from the turn of the millennium.¹⁶⁹ One key difference between the basic ideas of the *old new economy* (NE v1.0) and the *new new economy* (NE v2.0) is that the 1.0 version stressed that *the new economy belongs only to the young*. As has been said, using some secret method, young nerds – few of whom had any economic education to their name – had acquired the secret wisdom of the new economy logic. How the vague wisdom of the old new economy has been absorbed by some young heads was never found out. The NE v1.0 bubble burst, after which a minus mark was placed alongside many of the perceived gains (it being noticed later, that some of the people in the young IT firms that made millions in share flotations did not even know how to write the minutes of the board meeting).

The starting point of the *new new economy* is that all people are involved, the key word being *participation*. For example, people write online diaries, *blogs*, which may concentrate on one person's life or on just one of his hobbies. "Tribes" can form around them which themselves are small but which form a huge mass of information, entertainment and communication when added together. Bloggers disseminate information about their blogs through a kind of peer network, and this communication is characterised by strongly accelerating growth. For example, it was estimated in 2005 that Americans read blogs more than they read the website of the newspaper giant *The New York Times*.

Andy Warhol made his famous prediction in 1968 that in the future everybody will have their 15 minutes of world fame. *He was quite right – partly*. It is true that anyone can set up their own blog now, write anything on it that can be read by anyone who has Internet access, perhaps via the only terminal in an African village. In the same way, we can set up a webcam in the kitchen, the bedroom or anywhere else where interesting things are going on that we wish to share, and then connect it to the Internet for anyone to be able to watch. The big question is who exactly our messages are of interest to.

Blogs are part of tribalisation; most of them do not achieve broad publicity, but some of them can become hits for various reasons. For example, in Finland the election diary kept by the journalist Unto Hämäläinen for the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* in conjunction with the presidential elections in early 2006 received comments from thousands of people, and probably a lot more people read it. Even before then, journalists kept a close eye on the online diary of Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja. It may be speculated that the reasons for this were his expertise, his tendency towards independent thinking and also that he can write.

People spend a large part of their time in IRC galleries and in countless other chat rooms, where they express their views on every conceivable subject. (There is not always prior censorship, which can be seen *inter alia* in webchats run by the Finnish tabloid press; although people have a hard time writing in full sentences and they use compound words any old how, there are opinions to be found on everything). The limits of interaction now lie more in the imagination than in technology, which is itself becoming more diverse, efficient and user-friendly, of course.

In addition to blogs, *e-commerce* – trade between companies, between companies and consumers and directly between consumers – is constantly on the rise. Some commercial entity offers a platform for auctions between consumers, for example, and the consumers themselves generate all the content for it. The best-known auction sites are *ebay.com* and, in Finland, *huuto.net*.

Wired journalist Chris Anderson used the concept of *The Long Tail* in 2004 to describe how the online bookstore Amazon.com was creating a new business model whereby efficient combined sales of low-circulation books and accessories generated demand comparable to that of bestselling books. A large part of Amazon's turnover is derived from the sales of rare books that sell only a few dozen copies a year. These do not incur storage costs because they are acquired to order from specialist bookstores.

Traditional *antiquarian bookshops* can network so that from any bookshop it is possible to access information about what books are in stock in all the other antiquarian bookshops connected to the network. From one shop books can be bought from the range held by a million stores. The business logic favours everyone: the buyer gets

what he wants, the remote antiquarian bookshop gets his specialised book sold and the intermediary gets his cut.

One feature of online shopping is that it builds up *consumer profiles* which are used by such as Amazon.com to approach customers. When people buy a book, it tells them what other books have been purchased by others who have bought their chosen book. Furthermore, it takes it upon itself to propose new books which fit the consumer profile which has been formed on the basis of a person's past purchases.

The *Wiki* phenomenon is one of the most important features of *NE v2.0*. Wikis are websites which anyone can go and make changes to. Perhaps the best-known of these to date is the *Wikipedia* encyclopaedia. As far as we know, it has already surpassed the world famous *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in its scope.¹⁷⁰ Considered problematic has been the level of quality and reliability of the information fed in by whoever, but it does look as though the size of the concern has been overestimated. A broad and high-level bank of material has built up on Wikipedia, and the same goes for its Finnish version. Just to give one example, in autumn 2005 a jointly (and globally) agreed process was launched within the World Futures Studies Federation, the global organisation of futures researchers, whereby professionals in the field entered information on the subject to Wikipedia.

The wiki action carried out by the futures researchers involved researchers and thus professionals in the field, but just as important and a new Internet phenomenon is the *role of amateurs* in generating content. One excellent Finnish example is provided by the *Star Wreck* film from 2005, which parodies *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* and other sci-fi films, and which was produced by amateurs (Samuli Torssonen et al.) through years of determination and an almost non-existent budget. The producers made their film available for free distribution on the Internet, and it had been streamed over four million times by April 2006 – one can only speculate as to how widely the film has circulated in addition to the streaming through different kinds of peer networks and other interaction between fans. In January 2006 the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) screened the film in four parts. The film is being described as a cult film that could prove more popular globally than any other Finnish film before it. The film's special effects, which were devised on home computers, stand up well to comparison with high-budget Hollywood productions. Many different views may be taken of the plot, the jokes and the acting – and the same applies to what *Star Wreck* was modelled on.

A particularly significant part in the virtual movement is played by *online gaming*, in which people circulate in new *virtual cosmoses*, create them and develop different characters and roles within them. In early 2006 one of the most popular Internet games worldwide was the aforementioned *World of Warcraft (WoW)*, which millions of teenagers and young adults around the world were playing.¹⁷¹ It is probably only with a change in generation that we will truly understand what the new virtual cosmoses mean for people: as was said above, as everything virtual can be made better, more beautiful, more powerful, more intelligent, etc than its “naturally” occurring equivalent, and as an increasing proportion – probably before long the majority – of our waking hours are being spent in virtual cosmoses, why should we spend any more time in the “real world” than is absolutely necessary?

You have to eat, pop to the toilet, sleep is mandatory – for now – but the rest of the time will be spent in the virtual world. *How will a future person of that kind be dragged along to a party conference at the Tampere Hall?*

The South Korean Generation C and Cyworld

South Korea is a world leader in virtual technology. Youngseok Seo has used age cohort analysis to conduct research into the future prospects for South-Korean society.¹⁷² He refers to those born in 1988 and later as Generation C. The letter C has many associations: creativity, contents, the dream of becoming a celebrity and inter alia an openness towards new technology and imaging (digital photography, MMS). A representative of Generation C wishes to produce, feature in and circulate his own blogs, pictures, his various virtual creations, characters and showrooms to millions of like-minded people on the Internet and to be at least a minor celebrity. Trendwatching.com describes South Korea's Generation C as follows: they open their showrooms on funky new platforms, such as Cyworld. Cyworld is a South-Korean phenomenon involving 10 million people (a quarter of the country's population). They have their own "cyber channels" on which home-made poems, stories, songs, pictures, videos and anything else they may have to show are accessible to other members of Generation C. Furthermore, people can adorn their virtual spaces with different kinds of digital decorations, such as with videos and music, which they can buy in Cyworld currency, acorns. "Real" producers, agents, talent scouts and employers are also interested in the contents of Cyworld.¹⁷³

Seo points out that Generation C has grown up within a mature democratic and diverse society, unlike its predecessors. Living in a stable society of abundance, they are politically apathetic. They are interested in being creative and having fun using modern technologies.

The young people of Generation C do not assess things on an axis of "good" to "bad" but on a scale of "I like" to "I don't like".

Beyond the Wikipedia context, there is an ongoing debate on the *reliability* of the information on the Internet – for example, getting material into traditional scientific journals requires stringent peer review (that may last over a year), and even ordinary local papers carefully select which readers' letters they publish. However, it seems that the openness of the Internet serves as an effective guarantor of quality in most cases. Moreover, the Internet is effective in the sense that it can be used to detect and circulate information about plagiarism, forgeries and the like more quickly and widely than before.

A good example is the case of James Frey. A hard-hitting biography of an alcoholic and drug user, *A Million Little Pieces*, which topped the list of non-fiction bestsellers in September 2005 in the United States, turned out for the most part to be fiction. Frey admitted having made up key parts of the story of surviving the hell of drugs and drink and drying out. The book was recommended to TV viewers by such as popular talk show host Oprah Winfrey. There may be plenty of other such deceptions, but what matters here is that *the fraud was revealed thanks to the Internet community*. An online investigative journalism site *The Smoking Gun* proved that a substantial part of the book's content was not faithful to the truth. Traditional evaluation of reliability had not worked and the well-known publisher *Random House*, which published the book, had not noticed anything strange about the manuscript.¹⁷⁴

At the same time as the Internet in its transparency reveals cases such as the above, it also supports democracy, at least in principle. Information cannot be pawned and twisted as easily as in the past. On the other hand, new information and communication technology provides an unregulated forum for circulating purely unsubstantiated rumours about politicians.

Academic economists have also started taking an interest in virtual worlds, since real money is circulating within them.¹⁷⁵ The most important thing is to note that when we talk about the new version of the new economy, we are no longer just talking about economy but about societal influence. *It would be strange if the participatory economy were not to manifest itself also as participatory politics.* Participation is associated in principle with membership of society and democratic influence. It may be that the aforementioned *participation in the economy, interaction between people, gaming and the rest will over time create identities and thought structures and communities that resemble ideologies. Virtual parties.* The party-political map will change without being noticed and without any decisions being taken on the subject.

New ideologies?

The brave new future, the information society, was the subject of lively discussion among researchers in the early 1980s – *the concept of the information society* was devised by Japanese professor Yoneji Masuda, who presented it for the first time in the 1970s. A potted version of the Finnish debate on the subject is provided by a publication from the Finnish Ministry of Transport from 1986 entitled *Tietoyhteiskunta meissä - pelot, toiveet, teot* (*The information society within us – fears, hopes, deeds*). The government presented its report *Suomen tulevaisuus ja toimintavaihtoehdot* (*The future of Finland and alternative courses of action*) to the Parliament in October 1993, and the Parliament pursued its examination of the report in the *Committee for the Future*, whose own report was finalised in late 1994. The first government of Paavo Lipponen published the first part of its own futures report on the subject of *Finland in Europe* in autumn 1996, and the second part, dealing with Finnish society as inter alia a welfare society, in spring 1997. The second Committee for the Future in the history of Finland was convened in the Parliament that was elected in 1995. Futures strategies were drawn up in the ministries and the Ministry of Finance drew up its first report on its information society strategy, *Suomi tietoyhteiskunnaksi – kansalliset linjaukset* (*Making Finland an information society – national approaches*) in 1995. *Suomi-skenaariot* (*The Finland – Scenarios*) project of Sitra – the Finnish Innovation Fund – and the Prime Minister's Office was completed in spring 1995. Sitra updated the national information society strategy in 1998. A culture project by the Prime Minister's Office *Maanantaiseura* (*Monday Club*) steered a citizens' debate on the future and published nine futures reports on different themes and an extensive compendium in 1992–1996. A lot was done regarding the information society in the boom years of the 1990s. Since 2000 the boom appears to have passed, even though there is some work going on in the name of *foresight* in inter alia the ministries and in the activities of the Academy of Finland, Tekes – the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation and Sitra – the Finnish Innovation Fund. It is also worth mentioning the *information society programme*, one of the policy programmes of the

Vanhanen's first government, under which the third *National information society strategy* was published in September 2006.¹⁷⁶

The previous run through of the recent past of the future is justified because there is something strange about it all. The writer of this report expressed surprise at this in 1997: "One feature of reflections on the information society has begun to trouble me: its lack of ideology. It is thought that the information society as a phenomenon is a technological matter, which "everybody" more or less supports and which is more about learning to use different instruments than it is about societal tensions and choice. In my own view, however, the information society is very much a societal phenomenon with different ideological charges, which will be seen before long also as societal and political movements, alternatives and power struggles. Something of a simplification: the last significant societal movement of industrial society, the green movement, politicised environmental issues, but the politicisation of the information society still awaits its prophets and authors. We futures researchers could also be slightly criticised for presenting in-depth economic and technological scenarios for the information society, while making do with general slogans along the lines of "direct democracy is on the increase" and "civil society is gaining ground" when it comes to societal ideologies and influence."¹⁷⁷

Has the situation changed in ten years? Not really. It was stated above that the information society generates its own tensions and ideologies and is not just a matter of technological and economic change. However, no new and impressive ideological structures or information society parties with exponential increases in their support have yet been seen.

In futures assessment it has become a habit in recent years to talk about *emerging issues*, phenomena which are "germinating" and which do not usually have a clearly identifiable past. They have not existed before or at least not to any significant extent. A weak signal is not a trend but it could develop into one.¹⁷⁸

When Silicon Valley began to develop as an emerging issue in the 1970s, in the view of Professor Bart von Steenberg, who has researched the subject, it was at least as much a *social innovation* as a *technological* one. Certain young men running "backyard garage" companies were thinking in a way that had not been usual until then. Even in the 1970s it was predicted that there would only be room in the world for a few computers. These would be wired up to a set of terminals that would be used by major strategic players - state governments and giant companies. The idea that small operators, even individuals, would also have information processing needs was strange, new and revolutionary. *Personal computing*, *PC*, was something new in the 1980s, while now it is everywhere and taken for granted. Mobile phones (late 1980s) and the Internet (exponential growth took off in around 1993-95 thanks to WWW technology) began their victory parades as emerging issues.

The same logic by which emerging issues develop into trends (megatrends if all goes well) also operates in terms of societal phenomena. In exactly the same way as no new technology and the innovations that it spawns are major and decisive when they are born, nor are any societal players and the ideologies and tensions that give rise to their actions. *It is hard to find even a single example from mankind's societal, economic and technological arenas of activity of something that was a major megatrend from when it first came into existence.*

It is difficult to say with any certainty what the big ideological map of the future will look like. However, it is possible to identify emerging issues, idea drivers, which have ideological features and that may become more powerful in the future. We can talk of brand-new ideologies, but also of recycled versions of old ones. The following are a number of possibilities (in no particular order).

Meritocracy as an ideology. The complex nature of modern society was referred to above; the division of labour becomes more refined, fields and professions become more specialised, expertise becomes more in-depth and narrows into specialist expertise. Society, economy and technology are becoming more complicated and contain numerous material and non-material risks. “*What if meritocrats take over?*” asked one professor at the world conference of futures researchers in August 2005. An ultra-realist may reply that it has already happened. One key question for the future is how meritocratic expertise can be combined with people’s “value expertise”, which they express through parties and movements in society, so that decisions and actions reflect people’s values and the experts remain within their remit. One reply may be: “*No way!*” Even though any two experts may – and probably will - have different sets of values, enough experts can find enough common elements of ideology and attitude for *meritocracy to develop into an ideology in its own right*. This ideology states that expertise always comes first. Differences in societal views are explained not by differences in values, but for the most part by the fact that some people know more and are more intelligent than others. Supporters of meritocracy, meritocrats, can form societal movements, perhaps parties, and aspire to significant positions in society and then to achieve the ideals of meritocracy.¹⁷⁹

Technocracy as an ideology. This is a special case of meritocracy. The power of engineers in modern society is actually extremely great, even without them being given any special encouragement to found their own ideological movements. Modern state-of-the-art technology is not value-free; it contains more ideology than the simpler technology of the past. A hammer could be used to build a house or to deliver grandma a blow to the head, and it was not reasonable to make the inventor of the hammer responsible for what was done with the technology. On the other hand, *nuclear power* in both the peaceful and destructive sense has a lot of in-built ideology, which sends out a message about the value scheme of its designer and producer and of the socio-economic complex which makes it possible in the first place. If one is building a nuclear bomb, it is not credible to say that “it can also be used for decoration”. Another modern technology with an “ideological charge” is the massive *transport system* and a similar kind of technology for the future is *gene technology*. The more advanced and complicated technology becomes, the harder it will be for laymen to participate in the debate surrounding its further development and the greater the temptation for technologists to extend their influence beyond technocratic expertise to society.

Neo-Marxism. The ideals of socialism and communism have not died; they are just lying dormant. Some of the ideals of socialism have been repeated almost every time eu-utopias, ideal futures, have been sketched out. The most important ideals are the individual’s emancipation from the slavery of work and the predominance of the community dimension. Back in Thomas More’s *Utopia*, which first appeared in 1516, work

was done just to produce the necessary commodities, the working day was limited to six hours and private property was not known. Even in the 1980s, in the utopian debates about the models of the *dual society*, a general target was set of constantly shrinking the hard sector (the ever more efficient production of goods and services), while at the same time the realm of freedom (increasing free time for things which are valuable and desirable in human terms, such as self-development, being with others, culture, philosophising and fishing) expands and furthermore all people are involved in the activities of both sectors. Let it be noted that some of the dual models are based on Marxist philosophy, but not all of them.¹⁸⁰

Neo-Marxism is a fairly clear ideological structure and societal aspirations representing its different versions will be seen around the world in the next few decades. For example, it may be considered that NOW in Russia such despotism prevails and capitalism in the country is so advanced and cut-throat that the time has come to rise to the barricades and bring about a socialist revolution in Russia. To overthrow the Tsar. The first attempt was made in theoretically the wrong way, against a backdrop of underdeveloped capitalism. A lot of practical errors were also made later.

Neo-liberalism, libertarianism. Just as strong as the ideas of collectivism (socialism, communism, communitarism) are the neo-liberalist ideas of the freedom of the individual and his responsibility for coping on his own (“Each person is the architect of his own fortune”) and of life as a fight for survival and a contest in which some fare better than others. The role of society should be minimised, because the market and agreements between free individuals and the communities that they come from, such as companies, can essentially satisfy all human needs more efficiently than strictly hierarchical societal institutions. In maximising the benefit to himself, a person can best help his community, his nation, for example.

The names may change or else they are not recognised, but the basic philosophy of neo-liberalism will guide many significant societal players now and in the future.

Religions as societal ideologies. In the early 21st century, we are living through a time of profound *neo-religious sentiment*. In Muslim countries religion has always dominated. Islam, which in recent years has featured more and more strongly on the world stage as an ideological and political religion, may become very prominent as a consequence of global demographic change alone. Religious fundamentalism has long been in good shape in the United States too. It has lent support to the administration of President George Bush, which represents nation state-centred and unilateral neo-conservatism (with which for example Jim Dator, the American professor of political science, has associated the concept of imperialism), and not neo-liberalism, which sets out to operate beyond nation states and to weaken them.

After the 2004 European Parliament elections, two successful Finnish candidates were grateful that their prayers of election victory had been answered. In the debate surrounding the European Union’s draft constitutional treaty, demands were made for a reference to be written into the treaty to the Christian values on which European values are based. In welcoming the incumbent President in early March 2006, the speaker of the Finnish Parliament said “God bless” in the American style. An opinion poll in summer 2006 showed that one in every three Finns does not believe in the

theory of evolution.¹⁸¹ In autumn of 2006, a survey was published that showed that two thirds of young people in Finland believe in God.

One can speculate about the reasons that underpin religious belief. Have the development of technology and economic changes with the accompanying globalisation and China and India phenomena been too rapid and brutal? Have terrorism and indeed the world in general (tsunamis, freak weather, pandemics) started to frighten people, and have even people in western countries begun to seek sanctuary once more from the world in churches and in irrational beliefs? Has the increasingly superficial and entertainment-focused media reduced people's capacity for intelligently daring and critical thought? It may also be that for many of those that do not believe in the teachings of churches themselves, the traditions and rituals that they offer (christening, marriage, funerals, etc) give a structure and security to their lives.

Neo-religious belief may manifest itself in the future as determined societal movements.

Systems humanism. It is possible that the more complex nature and accelerating pace of societal development will generate different intellectual ambitions to create new mindsets and practical solutions that combine humanism and features of systems thinking. Key words are multi-sectoral thinking instead of sectoral thinking, the shift from linear thinking to systems thinking as an ideology, the negotiating mechanisms of communicative rationality and the long-term perspective. In place of meritocracy, the focus is on *philosophocracy*, not just the importance of factual expertise but of broader philosophical wisdom and citizens' debates in setting societal objectives and assessing the virtues of the different alternative solutions. *Humanistic systems intelligence* is at its best more effective as an argument than soft universal humanism and is able to beat narrow economic ideologies in societal debate. On the other hand, it is more all-embracing than narrow-based technocratic and economic thinking.

A gifted populist could translate the above into the language of the people and set it on the road to election wins.

Hedonism Instant. The idea generated during the Age of Enlightenment of progress, of the future as a place where things are better, appears to have disappeared from people's minds and from the collective conscience of society. One of the most powerful ideologies of the next few decades in western countries may be the already prominent *Hedonism Instant*. The need for instant kicks seems to be insatiable. At no time in the past have they been available in such quantities and so easily. In practice, everybody has a television and twenty four hours a day can be spent quite nicely watching light entertainment programmes, for example lapping up reality formats that spotlight the nature and life of other ordinary folk. If that with all its repeats is not enough, then there are quiz shows, idle chat on the Internet, computer games and a lot more besides. The circulations of the most lowbrow entertainment magazines have been going up. In addition to all that, a person has a wonderful opportunity to gorge himself into gross obesity. In societies like Finland, for 99 percent of people getting fat is not a matter of money. The manifestations of hedonism are many and have a tangible and intangible dimension.

Hedonistic ideology is self-centred and is not interested in the future other than at most as a means of maximising the present. One version of such thinking was the

yuppie culture of the 1980s and in particular its extreme form, “the ultras”, whose philosophy in life can be summed up as follows: “Everything, for me, now.” The recession in Finland in the early 1990s put a damper on yuppie culture, but only for a while.

Of course, it may be thought that a far-reaching obsession with health is one modern form of hedonism. The same is true of people’s appetite for well-meaning and generally innocent flimflam – services of astrology, reiki treatments, zone therapies and the like.

There is a good market niche for the political realisation of hedonism. It is just a matter of time before societal movements are formed which can acquire their political motion energy by invoking people’s *McDonalds rights*.

Transhumanism. The visionary Alvin Toffler spoke over a quarter of a century ago of the three waves of societal development phases, meaning agrarian society, the industrial society phase and the third stage of societal development which is currently underway and referred to in this report as the information society.¹⁸² At this point in time, we could extend Toffler’s terminology and already talk of future players of the *fourth wave* – *biosociety*, an age characterised by bio-, material and nanotechnologies. Supporters of *transhumanism* can be included in this group. Transhumanists are in principle prepared to accept all technology that helps people to develop as individuals and as a race. In that case, we are not talking about the Internet and mobile phone density, but rather about the idea that *technology can and actually must be used to enhance a person*. A person could be developed along the lines of a cyborg by fitting him with various aids from information and communication technology, he could be processed through genetic modification (memory, intelligence, speed, strength, endurance, etc), his life span could be extended indefinitely, the possibilities of the virtual space should be exploited to their full potential and much more.¹⁸³

You do not have to be a transhumanist to belong to the fourth wave of actors. The author of this report is not, even though he takes a positive view in principle of the wise application of intelligent new technology.

The societal reflections of transhumanists may appear underdeveloped, even naive. However, their significance in the longer term should not be neglected. Transhumanists declare cryptically that there is a need for “a social order with which to implement responsible decisions”. Anyone who has followed societal development understands that for example, democracy is not the kind of social system that always generates responsible decisions. No attention has been paid to the declaration of the transhumanists. Little information about them has circulated at the beginning of the 21st century. “There have always been oddballs,” someone could say, but transhumanists are not oddballs.

Biosociety movements and parties. It was stated above that at first the information society was not perceived to be a social issue, but seen in a restricted light as a merely technological issue. Now information society has long been talked of a societal development phase, even though ideological issues around it and the players that are driving it are difficult to gain a clear picture of. As far as the biosociety is concerned, *we are basically in the same position today as we were in the debate on the information society a good twenty years ago*. People understand the *technological* value of biotechnologies and other new technologies, material and nanotechnologies, but they cannot or do not

want to recognise their *societal* importance. However, the scene has been set for the ethical debate itself and the first assessments of the future prospects of the biosociety have been made.¹⁸⁴

The biosociety raises a whole host of ethical questions, highly divergent opinions and movements to push them. What view should one take of stem cell research, which is extremely important in the development of gene therapies, of other medical opportunities, of direct human enhancement (“designer human” ideologies) and, for example, genetically modified food? For religious or other reasons, there is opposition to all or part of the opportunities afforded by new technologies.

It is pretty clear that the societal movements of the future will not just be against them, but rather there will be many that will strive to promote biosciences and rational exploitation of developing genetic knowledge. There will be many movements, including those formed by the relatives of Alzheimer’s patients and those suffering from different forms of cancer or Parkinson’s disease. They may assert the idea that “*We have a right to this!*” They may also join forces to form global movements and parties to break religious, ideological and other taboos that try to slow biotechnological research and development.

In the future, these will not be marginal issue but rather will be on high on the agenda of societal governance and decision-making.

Robots and the ideologies of robots. Is it possible that decisions could be taken by *robots* in the future? People would be able to concentrate on other things, such as their lives. When the Czech writer Karel Čapek coined the word *robot* he was creating a vision of *machine intelligence*. He used the term for the first time in his play R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots) in 1920.¹⁸⁵

In 2057 there would be 77 state-of-the-art artificially intelligent robots sitting in the Finnish Parliament and, like *C3PO* in *Star Wars*, they would have their own scheme of values and feelings. They would support different socio-political schools of thought and could be different in their physical appearance. The robot speaker would give the floor on an equal basis to the left and to the right, would keep track of schedules and would bring down the gavel to mark the taking of a decision. He would occasionally reproach the members for languages and dress. Minister robots would sit on their own benches, account for their actions and would answer the tough questions posed by the robot representatives.

Such a prospect is not credible for the simple reason that *decision-making is an area of purely immaterial industry*. It is merely a flow of information in multiple directions. Traditionally, the information has been channelled by way of biological creatures, people. A long time ago, a select band of wise men travelled round the various primitive courts to discuss and make decisions in a small group face to face. Over time, the intangible nature of decision-making has come to the fore as technology has been developed that allows communication to take place across great distances. Fixed-line telephone, telexes, faxes, video conferences, the Internet, computers mobile phones, virtual reality and other modern technology have already made it possible *for decision-makers not to need to meet up physically in the same place in order to communicate and make decisions*.

If decision-making moves in the future to the wholly virtual space and becomes a matter for “artificial intelligence”, why would it start to use clumsy mechanical devices

like robots? Indeed, that would be a step in the wrong direction, backwards. Clumsy devices, robots, and even clumsier biological creatures, people, would just slow down the work of virtual superintelligence and hyperbrains.

In the opinion of the renowned technology visionary Gregory Stock, as new technologies – and above all information and communication technologies – have developed, the link between the person and technology, and at the same time people's links with other people, have become so strong and will become even stronger in the future that as a consequence our societies are developing into what might be called massive living supercreatures and ultimately a global superorganism is developing, *Metaman*.¹⁸⁶ Global Brain, Matrix?

In the future of autonomous virtual intelligence and democracy, bytes will fly around faster than lightning, negotiate and take up positions on the form of laws and other decisions. *And virtual intelligence contains ideological force*. It is pretty much certain that over the next hundred years different forms of virtual intelligence and their developers will compete for societal and economic power.

An interesting issue that does not regard the technology itself, at least not in the beginning, is *where virtual intelligences get their ideologies from*. Who or what do they represent and what schemes of values will they have?

Others. In all likelihood, the most significant ideological inventions that will mark out the actual development cycle of the next hundred years have yet to be made. Unfortunately, it is likely that different ideologies of hatred, such as racism, will also thrive in the future. The same applies to fanatic rightwing and leftwing extremist movements. One possibility is that aspirations will surface to create a kind of timocracy in which rights increase with wealth. Before long a small group of superrich people would take the key global decisions (Bill Gates, Robert Murdoch, Kimi Räikkönen). Fortunately for democracy, attempts at world improvement of a quite different kind, such as human rights movements, those fighting the cause of global justice and movements in defence of the disadvantaged, will also be strong in the future. There will be reasons for environmental movements, including animal conservationists, to stay active for a long time to come. Valérie Fournier describes as utopianism the philosophy that, instead of static visions, what matters in the existing society is that there is constant change; in her view, these are represented by such as the grassroots movements in the so-called developing world of women and farmers and stateless people that are opposed to neo-liberalism.¹⁸⁷

In affluent societies a quite new type of “ideologies” may emerge, such as Potterism, for example: “Life is and may be like in a fairytale” (the story society and dream society having long been discussed). Another example is that of the *bohemian middle class* in Finland (the Bopos), whose attitude to life brought together the open-mindedness and counter-culture of the 1960s and the entrepreneurial yuppie culture of the 1980s.¹⁸⁸ Also possible are different *ideologies about virtual worlds*. A growing proportion of (young) people are spending almost all their time living (not just gaming) in virtual worlds that have their own rules; these can be made to suit one and can be changed whenever one feels like it. Everything can be done better than in the “real world”, and even the laws of nature can be adjusted. *Over time, the virtual will be what is actually real for them*.

In any case, it is clear that people always act in line with one set of values or another. People have different values, attitudes, interests and beliefs.¹⁸⁹ They also organise themselves in different ways in order to function more efficiently than if they were alone. There are few things that one can be as sure of as that things will continue that way in the future.

Unfortunately, this in no way guarantees that as a result a development will emerge that will uphold the modern democratic ideals of freedom, equality, compliance with the law and justice, whatever these may mean at the various stages.

*“What matters is to note that the representative democracy based on majority rule that has been exercised over the past hundred years has in a way reached the end of the line; those who in their day formed the impoverished, badly educated and subjugated masses, i.e. the common people, have turned into an overwhelming majority of the people in developed democracies. It is a relatively well off, increasingly well educated governing majority that is exercising power through its own organisations and representatives. For some reason, a considerable proportion of this majority is not satisfied with the results achieved, but yet these dissatisfied individuals are not willing or are unable to come together to bring about a different state of affairs. On the other hand, no such factor is discernible that could unite those in dire need, those excluded from the development of welfare and culture, the fragmented and heterogeneous minorities, to form a single force to change society. Is it enough for a society that the majority is in good shape? Can the majority not actually solve the problem of the ailing minority, or does it not want to? **Or do we lack on the whole a model for taking democracy into the new century and the new millennium in a structurally very diverse society where its original ideals of majority rule were forged?**”[bolded by the author]*

– Olavi Borg 2006¹⁹⁰

The development does not necessarily even support the maintenance of cultures. As has been said by such as Marvin Harris in his book *“Cannibals and Kings”* (1977) and Jared Diamond in his book *“COLLAPSE. How societies choose to fail or succeed”* (2003) have shown, cultures have their own life span, their beginning, their heyday and their end, and in their short-sightedness people often drive the culture that they have developed to destruction.¹⁹¹ According to Harris mankind has at no point in his history consciously influenced the major changes on the planet; nor have people understood the impact of mechanisms of production and reproduction on attitudes and values, and they have been wholly unaware of the long-term and cumulative effects of their decisions, which they have taken to maximise the short term cost-benefit ratio.¹⁹² Diamond for his part says that there has for a long time been a sense that ecological problems will trigger at least in part many of the mysterious changes [collapses of past cultures;

comment by the author]: people unintentionally destroyed the resources of their environment on which their society was dependent. In recent decades, observations by archaeologists, meteorologists, historians, palaeontologists and palynologists (pollen experts) have confirmed these ideas of unintentional ecological suicide or ecocide.¹⁹³

Unfortunately, it would seem that humanity's *ideological deficit* at the beginning of the 21st century is in a frightening way associated with phenomena that are harbingers of cultural destruction. Even though there is definitely more knowledge in the modern information society and there should be a better understanding of where an economy, technology and society primarily reliant on non-renewable energy and other resources will lead in the long term – in actual fact, in a few decades – no one sees to be all that concerned about it. Let us quote Diamond again: He says that past collapses have tended to go down the same track, as if variations on a theme. Population growth forced people to adopt more efficient farming methods (such as irrigation, two harvests and terracing) and to extend their crop farming from the best areas that were used first to more marginal plots, so that more and more mouths could be fed. Unsustainable practices led to one or more of the aforementioned kinds of environmental damage [destruction of the habitat, problems associated with land and water management, over-hunting and over-fishing, the effects of alien species on native species, population growth and the increase in the individual influence of a nation; note by the author], which in turn lead to a situation in which the marginal areas had to be abandoned. As a consequence of this, there was a lack of food in society, famine, wars waged between too many people fighting for scarce resources and revolutions by disillusioned people against governing elite. Eventually the population dwindled due to famine, war and disease and society lost part of the political, economic and cultural complexity developed in its heyday.¹⁹⁴

An observer in 2107 may say: “A hundred years ago, we knew where we were heading, but we didn't care. A paradigm shift would have been necessary, but democratic administrations were so wrapped up in the existing paradigm, their own, that they were not capable of one, if they even wanted one.”

There is no lack of information in our age, but what we lack are inspirational ideals that will set the scene for a sound societal future. The ideals of the great French Revolution (1789) – liberty, fraternity, equality – were associated with the Age of Enlightenment and the idea of progress, the idea of a person's potential to create a future that is different, better than the past.¹⁹⁵ Nowadays someone who talks about the progress of humanity is branded a naive idealist that is not worth listening to.

As has been mentioned above, selfish economic success is for some an ideology in itself, and even many social commentators just trot out trendy jargon about competitiveness and cutting-edge expertise, etc. With what we know today, it should be clear that this will not enable cultures and societies to cope with the global challenges, environmental and other, of the future. Little is said of societal ideals, utopias and visions. Culture without ideals – and I am not talking here about totalitarian systems – becomes indifferent, stagnates, and its members turn into selfish predators and the whole society is in danger of destruction. This is not just scare-mongering; many cultures have already been destroyed.

A humanity of today should have an excellent chance of survival well into the future.

The arenas of democracy of the future

Arena (Lat. [h]arena = sandy field, battleground) = hist. battlefield, competition venue of the amphitheatre, the circus ring, sports grounds, racetrack, bullring; fig. publicity, stage

– dictionary definition

The arenas of democracy ⁱⁱ, where the key societal phenomena manifest themselves, will form a multidimensional set in the future:

- **Spatial size:** local – district – provincial – national – regional/supranational – global level
- **Democracy and the virtual world:** physical (“democracy is face-to-face meetings”) versus virtual (“no meetings are needed”)
- **Representativeness:** representative (“representative bodies chosen at elections and implementing democracy”) versus non-representative (“democracy is achieved through direct exercise of influence – groups, individuals”)
- **Ideologies:** strong convictions – opportunism – pragmatism

Previous chapters have examined changes in society, economy and technology and their effects on democracy in our time. The next chapter will first describe different scenarios describing alternatives for societal development. It will then go on to present futures theses in the long term up to 2017 and the supra-long term beyond 2017, and even up to 2107 in crude terms. The aim is to encapsulate what courses of development can be considered possible within those time perspectives. It is impossible to tell the whole story; instead, the author of the report will present the most crucial and interesting phenomena as he sees them.

What if? -scenarios

Alternative forms of societal development can be described as scenarios. In the following diagram, factors influencing societal development have been presented as three groups of agents, *demos* (nation), *kratos* (state) and *oikos* (economy). General trends in scenarios can be sketched out by describing the relative strength of these various factors. It is interesting to note that *it seems natural to position the traditional Finnish and Nordic model in the middle of this force field.*

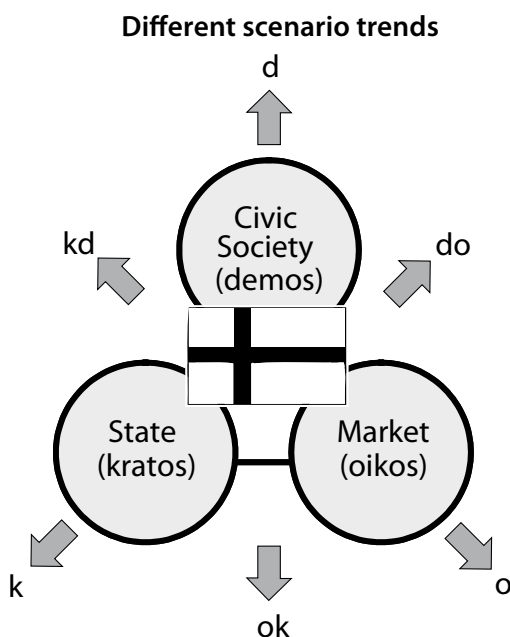
ii In the city states – polis – of Ancient Greece, the small group men entitled to public like – demos – executed democracy in a physically limited area. In this context the concept of arena is used instead of polis, because in the future democracy will be increasingly executed in virtual space. Arena can imply both a physical place, such as a village, and a virtual tribe.

Three simplified scenario trends are:

d: The reinforced civil society scenario. For example, communitarism, with its focus on non-state communities, the Anglo-American strain of which stresses the family and the European interpretation local communities and the third sector. Modern virtual tribes may be the most influential civil society players in the future.

o: The market-driven neo-liberalist ideology scenario. A self-organising market and a lightweight state are crucial here; the market dominates and the role of civil society is to deal with at least some of the tasks of the welfare state. High-levels of social security, unemployment benefit and taxation, which are considered to make people passive, are shunned. A person is the architect of his own fortune.¹⁹⁶

k: Marked state coercion scenario, for example socialism. Possibly religious fundamentalism, if it has eaten into the structures of the *kratos* (“state = religion”).



Different scenario paths can be created by combining *demos*, *oikos* and *kratos* according to the “two win, one loses” principle. This is exactly what one of the pioneers of scenario work Shell International has done in its latest global scenarios up to 2025.¹⁹⁷ They have been drafted from the perspective of the business world, but they are also interesting in the more general sense. For Shell, *demos* means social cohesion and the power of the community, *kratos* security, coercion and regulation, and *oikos* efficiency and market incentives. Below are descriptions of Shell scenarios in summary form:

do: (civil society and the market gain in strength) Open doors. The pragmatic “know me” world. Globalisation advances and civil societies in different countries consider

that their fundamental values can be reinforced and can also act supranationally and in connection with market forces. “In-built” security and compliance with the rules (global harmonisation of regulations), mutual recognition (appreciation), an independent media, voluntary codes of “best practice” and close contacts between investors and civil society promote cross-border integration and virtual value chains. Networking skills and unparalleled reputation management are all-important.

kd: (state and civil society gain in strength) Flags. The dogmatic “follow me” world. Global security and trust are not achieved on the world market. Dogmatic approaches, the fragmentation of legal provisions at global level, national preferences (patriotism) and conflicts between values and religions give “insiders” an advantage and put the brakes on globalisation. Investments are “brought home”, and security considerations are more important than economic efficiency. Fenced-off communities (high internal coherence, mistrust towards others), patronage and national standards exacerbate the disparate nature of the rule book and demand careful management of country risks.

ok: (the market and states gain in strength) A globalisation of low trust. The legalistic “prove it to me” world. Globalisation is advancing, and the possibilities offered by the market economy are being used, but the uncertainty of the international political situation remains and no market-based solutions to the crisis affecting market confidence are devised. The players – companies, clients, investors – endeavour to protect themselves using legalistic means. Regulators and states act correspondingly, and powerful states focus on safeguarding national interests. In this world, grievances are remedied in the courts. Regulatory changes occur at a fast pace and there are overlapping jurisdictions and conflicting laws. The situation encourages companies to think short-term. Unparalleled risk management is all-important.

The **alpha**, **beta** and **gamma** scenarios, which have emerged as this report has been written and will now be described, are short, simplistic and perhaps provocative caricatures, but they are possible. The idea is no longer to predict, but rather to show what essentially different alternative forms of development the future has in store. The time perspective for the scenarios is roughly 15-20 years, unless otherwise specified.

Alpha scenario: the advance of a civilised and open global democracy

The key assumption behind this scenario is that the trend towards rapid technological and economic development as well as pressing threats to the environment will urge and also force societal players to promote global democracy with determination, and far more so than they were doing around the turn of the millennium. Globalisation and the societal development of supranational regions, such as the European Union, the North American NAFTA and East Asia, will make such positive progress that supranational societal institutions will gradually establish a moral code for regional supranational and global market forces and other players.

The European Union will succeed in the development of its decision-making system and inter alia in its approach to security in the 2010s, when a rule book akin to the Union’s constitutional treaty will also be adopted. The power of the European Par-

liament will increase further, the key EU member states will join a single currency system, and the European Union will emerge ever more clearly as one of the key players in global society. The European Union will have democratic legitimacy and a reasonable level of support from its citizens. The EU will be more transparent than it is today, the leadership of the EU will have reduced the Union's interference in trivial matters, and there will be greater compliance with the subsidiarity principle. Furthermore, the Union will display features of a federal state.

The overall atmosphere in society in Finland, Europe and to a certain extent in the wider world will be marked by respect for the individual, societal responsibility and a sense of community, and not merely on unilateral competition. Among international societal players, the view of societal development will in the early part of this century begin to develop along the lines that, in the context of a globalising information society, the best way of guaranteeing economic prosperity is also to guarantee a basic level of security for citizens by reforming the welfare society and providing resources for science, broad-based and high-quality education and functioning societal services.¹⁹⁸ The general aim is to create economic growth, but to do so in such a way that it happens within the framework of the basic conditions for ecologically sustainable development and a democratically agreed set of rules.

Economic development will bring mostly benefits to all the major economic regions, the United States, the territory of the European Union, South-East and South Asia, South America, Russia and Finland. The economies of the information society will become more focused on developing content and service technologies and industries ancillary to them. The ubiquitous society with its omnipresent intelligence will be present in many aspects of people's everyday lives, economy and society. At the same time, the adaptation of heavy industry to the technologies and operating models of the information society will take strides forward, the latest information and communication technology will be used creatively and efficiently, and rigid hierarchies will be replaced by network-like operating models. Issues surrounding content, in other words that products and services stem from people's needs, and not technology itself, will turn into the primary drivers of development, and the companies that produce them will succeed. There will be a strong welfare cluster in countries like Finland. Biotechnology will be developed systematically within the framework of a democratically defined set of rules, and it will generate significant results, which are of relevance for such as human health and food production. The biosociety will be on the rise.

Companies will often be supranational ("stateless"), and who owns the company will be irrelevant to those who work in it. Specialisation and the birth of new professions in the thriving sectors will typify this scenario. Economic players will form a network economy for the whole of Europe and also at global level. The market is open and global, and as a set of rules on globalisation emerges, the development in the long term will lead to a narrowing of differences in standards of living and to a simultaneous increase in mutual dependence between different countries and continents. A growing middle-class, the advance of democracy and a reduction in military activities will characterise this scenario. The Asian economies will rise and to a certain extent adopt "western" values, without abandoning the basic features of their own cultures.

Emerging global governance will manifest itself in the form of an increasing number of more binding agreements. In 2019 the first significant global referendum will be held to set the course of the global resource economy. Democratic global gov-

ernance will take on more systematic forms over time. In the world of the future, 30-50 years from now, there will already be strong democratic world governance. Its job will be to decide on the most important issues facing the globe, such as the use of key non-renewable resources, worldwide environmental issues, the protection of the air and seas, the main rules for running the global economy, including the treatment of the workforce, global security and the resources that this entails, the implementation of worldwide taxation and other matters on Earth – and to a degree in near space too. The opportunities of the virtual world will be exploited more efficiently in decision-making, in which all the citizens of the world will participate. The queues of black cars and the ritual meetings of men dressed in black suits will be seen less often.

The power of states will shift not only to the supranational level but also downwards, to the local and regional level. There will still be tasks for the state to perform, concerning inter alia citizens' trust in societal systems, basic security and welfare, as well as the maintenance of physical and intangible infrastructure. The legitimate and territorial coercive power of the state will remain for a long time to come, but part of it will shift to higher supranational levels. Virtual governance at all levels and the interaction between them will replace traditional governance. A sense of community, provision of basic social security and high economic development in the most important areas of the world will ensure that societal development not least in Finnish society will be relatively stable.

Beta scenario: market liberalism will succeed globally

Market-liberalist thinking will gain momentum around the world, and the atmosphere in society, also in Finland, will begin to focus strongly on the individual and competition instead of on the community dimension. Success will become a mantra recited everywhere: in child day-care centres, schools, studies, working life, media entertainment and advertising.

Societal services will gradually become subject to market conditions, the level of public social security will go down and the idea of a Nordic welfare society will quickly be forgotten. In the early part of this century, the most influential players, market forces, which are most visibly represented by “stateless” global multinationals, will rise to reign supreme over the societal players. The logic of commercial interests will begin to regulate ever more strongly societal structures and both economic and political systems at the level of nation states and regional alliances, such as the European Union.

Global companies are able to exploit most effectively rapidly developing new technology, the globalisation of the market and production conditions, and networking. They generate their own economic clusters, the significance of which in the development of the world economy and societies becomes crucial, more significant than socio-political aspirations. The global capital markets dominated by big business can no longer be controlled by societal institutions. Companies steer the international economy, trade, investment and capital flows and also exert influence in all societal processes.

The main rules governing economy and society are not actually set by democratic institutions and processes but by virtual tribes of company directors, which gradually affirm their identities, missions and internal rule books to such an extent that they

turn into strong virtual nations. In some places, such as the Nordic countries, reminders of corporate social and environmental responsibility, equality between people and other talk of thwarting the advance of the market economy will barely slow down the victory parade of global market liberalism.

The influence of democratic decision-making and governance will decline at all levels, both at the level of the state, province, region and municipality and, on the other hand, at the level of supranational, regional alliances, such as the European Union. Global democracy will not develop. A weak and conflict-ridden European Union will often end up confronted with solutions decided by global market forces and will fall victim to their dictates, in the same way as some states did in the 1900s. The intensification of EU integration and the enlargement of the Union will falter repeatedly. The interests of EU bureaucrats who are slow to detect changes in the world and those of quick-witted companies will become mutually opposed, and the EU representatives will lose again and again when those interests clash.

Economic development in itself is beneficial in many significant regions – the United States, South-East and South Asia, South America, Europe and Russia. Economic growth, an open market and competition are the primary drivers of development. The heavy industry of the past will modernise with the help of information and communication technologies, while, for those who can afford them, there will be a plentiful supply of content and services based on the new innovations of information and communication technology. Significant innovations will also appear in the area of bio-, material and nanotechnologies. The relationship between consumers and technology is defined by business interests, and not by ethical concerns about the effects of products on health and the environment.

A great deal of inequality is in evidence; there are those that succeed and those that cannot keep pace with development. This applies both to differences between individuals and to those between companies, fields, regions and countries. Regional development, including in Finland, will become highly centralized and the majority of companies and people will move to the major urban centres. Rural areas and some neighbourhoods will be peopled by the elderly and those who are marginalised in different ways. Those who succeed will reside in their own guarded areas. Third sector players will strive to plug the gaps in a social security system in decline. However, enough people will do well enough for no widespread unrest to break out.

Gamma scenario: culturo-religious blocks with their models of democracy

The world will split into culturally different blocks developing at different speeds, and the liberalisation of the world economy will gradually turn to protectionism at the level of these cultural blocks. Widely divergent cultural realities will live side by side. Tension will arise, but not conflicts as such, because the ambition of promoting globalisation, finding common values and coming up with the same kind of societal and economic rules will gradually be abandoned. States will form regional groupings. Development in each country and grouping will be based on each one's distinctive economic, political and social circumstances. The understanding of the need for democracy and its interpretations will be different in the various blocks.

One clear cultural block will be formed by Europe.¹⁹⁹ The European Union and Finland as part of it will develop in terms of economy and society in a “more European” direction than before. An atmosphere marked by a strong sense of community and regionalism will lead to strong societal governance at different levels in the EU and in Finland among others. The European Union and other areas of the world will gradually form regional blocks but at the same time the EU will develop internally in the direction of a federation of independent states.

Democratic decision-making models will be valued and developed in the European states. New technology will be exploited, and virtual decision-making, virtual governance and citizens’ both representative and direct participation in decision-making will be active.

Perhaps paradoxically, once ambitions of globalisation have crumbled, there will be a lively debate in Europe about European values, ideals and key visions. Key words in those debates will be democracy and human rights, ecological sustainability and social equality, as well as creativity, science, state-of-the-art technology and economic efficiency. In that upbeat atmosphere a European baby boom will take place.

The European Union and Finland as part of it will be able to achieve a reasonably high level of economic development on their territory, in spite of a flagging global economy. The new fields of the information society will become more powerful as the information society moves into a different stage with a focus on content and services, and products and services stemming from people’s needs and the companies that produce them will succeed in fast-developing countries such as Finland. Traditional heavy industry will make more use of the information and communication technology of the information society, and new technologies (biotechnologies et al.) will be widely developed in Europe and partly in conjunction with the US-led block. There will be strong developments of fields in the welfare cluster catering to the needs of an ageing population.

In the United States, the scheme of values based on powerful value conservatism, religious fundamentalism and marked patriotism that was seen at the turn of the millennium will gain momentum in this scenario. However, even the remnants of neo-liberalism will fade from the atmosphere that currently prevails in this country. Militarism and unilateral attempts at global leadership, which the powers behind the Bush administration have successfully propagated in the early 2000s, will decline. The United States will become introverted and concentrate on internal affairs, even though the connection with Europe will remain for a long time to come in the form of different scientific, cultural, economic and societal interactions. Over time, the United States will become a value-conservative society imbued with religious feeling, which in the eyes of a more open-minded European culture will start to look old-fashioned and uninteresting.

Led by India and China, Asia with its wide panoply of cultures will become more powerful. The Asian block will have at its disposal all necessary resources and an internal market (a good half of the global population will live in Asia in the future), and Asian cultures will not need Europe any more than they need the US-led block to support their own development. Nevertheless, interaction will continue in many forms, albeit to a lesser extent than in the scenario marked by the realisation of the globalisation processes.

Elsewhere in the world there will be blocks which to European eyes “don’t live in this century”. Muslim cultures become intensely introverted and minimise their interaction with others with the result that they cannot keep pace with technological development, but further reinforce the religious cohesion of their culture. African cultures will be allowed to develop their own economic and societal models in peace, as interference by western culture gradually eases off.

Futures theses for democracy up to 2017

Ten years into the future is a long time perspective for examining technological changes and economy, for example. In terms of phenomena associated with societal influence, the changes are normally slower, but sometimes, such as when socialism collapsed, a lot can happen with them in a short space of time. Different scenarios can steer development in widely different directions, and the following theses are themselves “best guesses” of sorts and, on the other hand, matters to which attention should be paid even now:

1. Attempts to develop supranational democracy in the first instance at the level of the *European Union* continue, but are faced with contradictory pressures. The EU project stumbles ahead falteringly and without taking any major forward steps for the next ten years. Even in circles in principle positively disposed towards European integration, there may be increased criticism of the way the “EU show” is currently being run – elitism, selfishness on the part of nations, wrangling over trivia, slowness, the bureaucracy, and the paradoxical speed blindness of its enlargement ambitions. On the subject of Turkish membership, we are already being told that Europe is a community of values and that it too has its limits.
2. The EU’s credibility gap means that the potential to boost *the economic competitiveness* of Europeans compared to increasingly powerful areas elsewhere in the world, especially in Asia, is not being fully exploited. There are also grounds for fearing that in the long-term future *European models of democracy* and *European values* may end up carrying less weight in the highly important global interplay of different culture spheres than they could and deserve to. Europeans and they alone will promote these models and values, and the European attitude towards the rest of the world can currently be described as *submissively reactive*. The role of European values and cultures could be greater than the current trend indicates.
3. Turnout at elections in societies such as Finland has been declining. Citizens are even less interested in being active members of parties than they are in the ballot box. Nevertheless, *representative influence* will form the backbone of democracy for a long time to come. Societal tensions, of which the current parties were once a product, have been easing and the classes in society splitting into smaller societal groups. Participation in the exercise of representative influence has been changing into a kind of ritual. However, it will probably

continue relatively unchanged in the near future; the *party-political map* is unlikely to change significantly by 2017. More substantial changes in representative democracy and the party-political map will not happen until later.

4. The ageing of the baby boom generation and demographic change will affect *turnout at elections* and *the composition of representative bodies* for several decades. Older age groups have got into the mindset that democracy is specifically the exercise of representative influence and that voting is a duty that they perform diligently. Over the next 10-30 years, ageing may be reflected inter alia in the make-up of the Parliament and the content of its decisions. An ageing Parliament will take decisions that reflect that age.

Up to 2017 demographic change will tend to maintain the existing basic structure – such as the current party-political map – rather than substantially change it.

5. One interesting and not totally insignificant point is what kind of relationship the ageing society will form with a possible *rise in global democracy*. This raises inter alia *identity issues*. Will a 75-year old who has spent all his life in a wholly Finnish sphere of identity be interested in participating in the global exercise of influence, and is it right to demand that of him, or will a genuine identity as a European or global citizen come about only with a new generation? *Language skills* and *mastery of new technologies* will also influence the participation of an ageing population in global democracy.
6. *Tension between generations* in the exercise of societal influence may grow. At the same time, as the proportion of older people in the representative bodies goes up, which will probably be reflected in the content of decisions, the younger age groups – the 30-40-year-old Generation X and younger – will start all the more visibly and consciously to create their own culture of influence, outside the exercise of representative influence with the help of new technologies and in expression of the philosophy and culture of the information society. At their most critical, they will not necessarily acknowledge decisions taken by the representative bodies, but rather will create their own reality of influence. They will not have a majority in the representative bodies, but they will have a mastery of technology and the dynamics of economy, and for that reason their voice will have to be heard.
7. *The exercise of non-representative influence* will increase in the future in different ways – civil society organisations, third sector, use of Internet power, etc. Direct societal influence will increase in particular among younger age groups. They will feel comfortable using new communication technologies. The Internet, email and mobile phone are already instruments of societal influence, but they will be so to an ever greater extent in the future. The exercise of direct influence will gradually shift to a considerable extent to the virtual network. This will even mean that when the main objective of some action is concrete, such as a demonstration, a street sit-in and the like, planning it,

mustering the manpower and all the logistics surrounding the action will be virtual in nature. With the help of new information and communication technology, the possibilities for exercising direct influence will increase significantly. *A popular movement can be born on the Internet or via mobile phones in a few days or hours.* The subjects could involve demanding that decision-makers introduce a particular measure, a demonstration, defence of minority rights, a boycott of a given product or company across national boundaries, or opposition to a decision by a local council. People will be limited only by their imagination.

8. **Citizens' referendums** will be viewed positively, but these will probably be rare events in Finland between now and 2017. The ceremony surrounding citizens' referendums will restrict their application, even though it would be technically easier to conduct them at different levels, for example, in the municipalities. Quick electronic opinion polls, on the other hand, will become routine, and so many of them will be conducted that a flagging interest on the part of citizens could constitute a threat to them. It may be that well-run opinion polls erase the need to carry out so called advisory referendums. Opinion polls are also an effective way of identifying people's views without all the pomp and circumstance surrounding referendums and their morally binding nature.
9. It is possible that experiments will be carried out involving advisory citizens' referendums, *in which the right to participate will not be defined in territorial terms*, but rather on the basis of some other criterion: young people, nurses, pedestrians, etc. A critical debate will be held into how legitimate these referendums are. From 2017 onwards, such **citizens' referendums "within tribes"** will be conducted on a routine basis.
10. Increasing **migration** will probably broaden the spectrum of values, cultures, religions, lifestyles, views surrounding the desirable directions for society to develop in and perhaps opinions on the very idea of democracy. The multicultural debate on democracy will intensify in the near future. Representatives of different cultures will have increasing influence in the different forums of society, not least in political decision-making.
11. As the information society becomes more elaborate, the trend towards a world of **minorities** will weaken the natural base of societal organisations, such as parties and the trade union movement, which are built on large groups and majority thinking, and break people up into small groups of different kinds. These will include "*neo-tribes*", which can form around work or some other unifying factor, such as a hobby. The debate on *society in the plural* may well be born, but it will not have much impact in the run-up to 2017.
12. Alongside the trend towards minoritisation in the information society is the changing idea of what in terms of identity is the **basic unit of society**. In agricultural society it was *the extended family*, which was replaced by *the nuclear family* in industrial society. The information society seems to be leading us in

the direction of identity being oneself, *the individual*. This is set to have a major impact on the culture of democracy even before 2017, but even more clearly thereafter. The industrial welfare society was constructed first and foremost from the perspective of nuclear families; the society of the future, on the other hand, will be constructed for people who have a strongly individual identity and membership of many different (network) tribes.

13. New technologies will make an ever clearer mark on models of democracy. The rise of the “***Some Brother is watching you, knows and never forgets***” ***ubiquitous society*** will raise ethical and technical issues, such as the limits of supervision and protection of privacy, permanent fixtures on the political agenda.
14. The increasing power of the ***society of risk*** will have a similar influence in both virtual and physical issues of security. A more in-depth society of risk will create pressure to develop ***a society of trust***. This may mean that, instead of centralising governance, attempts will be made to reduce exposure to risk by developing network-like democratic systems which are composed of partly autonomous subsystems. Attempts will be made to minimise the risks of interactions between the subsystems. In terms of the control exercised by democracy and citizens, it is essential for the systems and in particular the societal decision-making that takes place within them to be transparent and understandable – *systems intelligence is needed*.
15. The use of new information and communication technology in the exercise of societal influence will become routine in the near future. There will be a gradual shift towards ***electronic voting*** at elections. In Finland electronic voting is being tried out for the very first time in three localities at the 2008 municipal elections. Electronic voting is set to spread very quickly, at first at polling stations in public places, but by 2017 ***online voting*** will also have been tried out at several elections. The trend is for people in the future to cast their votes and express other views on issues of society using a portable, personal communications centre (“virtual personal assistant”), wherever they happen to be. Traditional ways of voting will also remain in optional use for a long time to come.
16. The ***voting cycle*** at different elections in the future will probably shorten and later become flexible. There will be a move towards the idea of ***continuous voting***. In principle, people, at a pace defined by themselves, will signal what they think about the way things are being handled. A vote can be given, but it can also be taken away whenever the voter sees fit. Different applications that enable a departure from the rigid cycles of the representative system will probably be implemented in the next few decades. The first trials will be seen before 2017, but they will not become actual practice until later.
17. ***Election campaigning*** will for the most part transfer to the media and an increasingly interactive Internet before 2017. For old times’ sake, mini-hustings

in the home and outdoor rallies will still take place, but to a lesser extent. The cardboard posters will no longer appear in the street, and fewer and fewer candidate brochures in party colours will be taken home. People will be reminded of forthcoming elections by electronic means – television, the Internet, mobile phones and radio.

18. **Virtual administration and its infrastructure** will advance. By 2017 citizens will be able to attend to almost all of their important dealings with the authorities virtually. Traditional methods (“service points”) will be retained as far as resources allow.
19. **Virtual participation** will take on different forms. *Virtual participation in traditional societal functions*, such as committee and council work, will be possible for any citizen or local resident who may be interested. Information and communication technology will promote interaction between citizens and their influence on inter alia the subject matter of politics. This will include *citizens’ petitions*, “town meetings” and *virtual referendums* regarding legislation, for example. Representatives of administrative bodies and any residents who so desire will be able to participate in virtual town meetings arranged locally.
20. It will be possible to organise virtual dialogues also *at supranational* (Europe) and *global level* or **restricted by other than territorial criteria**: for example, it may be possible to set up a universal (global) and virtual gay parliament.
21. The more diverse the possibilities of new technology become, the more ways people will devise to exploit them, including outside the traditional channels of influence. It may then be possible to talk about **new and virtual agenda-setting and influence**. The Internet and other information and communication technologies will be able to be used in defining the political agenda and social debate more generally. This could be done by established groups, such as political parties and civil society organisations, or it could come about in the form of new phenomena such as “*swarm activism*”. *Swarm activism is used to describe innovative and surprising activism which exists and exerts influences through virtual networks without there being any organised body to lead it in any way*. Networks of activists will be loose and be able to change quickly.
22. Some virtual tribes may develop into powerful players that could be called **virtual nations**. One criterion in such cases may be a strong sense of belonging, which is generated by race, ideology, religion or some kind of mission, for example. A second criterion may be that the members of the virtual nation live in different parts of the world, and they form a tribe only in the virtual sense. A third criterion may be provided by a code of behaviour (“legislation”) specific to the tribe, and the virtual players that generate and apply it. A virtual nation may also have some kind of virtual jurisdiction, its own media, education system, etc. In the future, virtual nations may engage in power struggles with each other and traditional states. The *al-Qaeda* network, with its fervent hatred of western culture, may be considered an example of a primitive virtual

nation, which paradoxically makes efficient use of the virtual technology created by the culture that it hates. Furthermore, *the mutual virtual networks of directors of major global companies* may develop into increasingly determined virtual nations (where all members are leaders), which try to dictate the course of the global economy and, at the same time, general societal development.

23. The need to systematise ***futures work in representative bodies*** such as the Parliament will grow. Over time, the norm will be the idea that no set of far-reaching decisions with long-term effects will be taken without a thoroughgoing and impartial futures assessment, which will spark off a broad citizens' debate and on which the Parliament would be required to take a position. The role of the *Committee for the Future* of the Finnish Parliament as a key player in the implementation of parliamentary futures work will increase and other western democracies will learn from it. A coordinating form of cross-sectoral administration will be developed to support it.

Futures theses for democracy after 2017 – 2057 ... 2107

1. ***Other models will challenge democracy.*** It was stated above that the democratic system of society has extended its influence over the world over history. The continuation of this development may be considered a basic trend in the future too, because *democratic societies have been able to produce a scientific, technological, economic, societal and educational system of the very highest order.* However, the basic ideals of democracy, such as human rights, individual freedoms, unrestricted communication, etc, will be under pressure in decades to come from other systems of thought, values and convictions. It cannot be taken for granted that the global victory parade of democracy will proceed over the next hundred years. Democracy with a capital D constantly requires citizens and societal players who are bold enough to defend the ideals of democracy even when it does not appear to be politically correct to do so in a given climate.
2. ***The necessity of global democracy.*** After 2017 the pressure to establish a global democracy will further increase. The increased power of the *supranational* levels, such as the European Union, has long figured in evaluations by futures researchers. The same is true of the idea that in the longer term it will be justified to talk about *democratic global governance.* Matters to be addressed at the level of the planet are naturally major environmental and resource issues and, for example, a rule book for the global economy. To a certain extent, it is paradoxical that global democracy is also needed to protect people from phenomena generated by democracy itself, such as the influence exerted by the commercial giants spawned by the market economy operating within that democracy, which are a threat to equality between people, justice and, for example, the environment. The development towards a more powerful global

democracy may take place over a number of decades. *From the perspective of humanity and the globe, it would be worrying if we had to wait a hundred years for a functioning global democracy to emerge.*

3. Another possible scenario as an alternative to **global democracy** is the **heightened influence of regional blocks**. It is a possibility, but it is clearly a worse option. It may come about as a consequence of a lack of understanding and increased tension between cultural spheres and of competition between economically strong blocks. In that case, a situation may transpire in which democracy is applied in, for example, European societies and in North America, but not in all the other blocks.
4. **Other alternatives** to global democracy or regional blocks are either worse or downright disasters. The idea of a wholly decentralised and perhaps traditional rural community, which surfaces from time to time and which some people hold as an ideal, is an unlikely model for the future, but one which could actually materialise in the aftermath of a disaster.
5. **Declining role of nation states**. Membership of the European Union has already restricted the possibilities at the level of the state for independent legislation and policies in terms of commercial policy, regional policy, taxation, etc. Joining EMU took away the possibility of devaluations, which had previously been crucial to Finnish economic policy. The sovereignty of nation states will continue to shrink if global democracy advances – the actual sovereignty of states is also reduced by the growth in power of market forces at play worldwide. Supranational and global democratic institutions, agreements and other arrangements will lead to a situation where, in the space of a few decades, *the state level is just one of many arenas in which democratic societal influence is exerted, although it is set to maintain its special position for a long time to come.* At the same time, people will acquire many simultaneous identities. “Being European and a citizen of the world”, “being a Finn”, even “being from the city of Turku”, as identity statements will co-exist rather than cancel each other out.
6. **Global and local environmental problems** will come to a head by 2017, but it will only be beyond that time that the symptoms will be so pronounced that leaders of society are forced to face up to them, quickly and under great pressure. By then, the climate change will no longer belong to an undefined future; instead, the increased average global temperature, the melting of the icecaps, the rise in sea levels and freak weather conditions will be a present-day reality, a sizeable chunk of the Amazonian rain forest will have been chopped down, the same has already happened and is happening all the time elsewhere, desertification will have spread, battles for fresh water will have been fought, the local and regional effects of emissions and waste mountains will be massive, animal species considered valuable will be threatened with extinction, oil reserves will be running out and the dispute over world resources will top the world political agenda. Many people will lose their faith

in the ability of democracies to deal with these issues crucial to the fate of humanity, and different direct action movements, even militant ones, may receive broadening support.

7. It is to be assumed that the applications of new information and communication technologies will have a significant, if not critical, role in the reinforcement of global democracy. For example, they will make it possible to launch **a global popular movement in a matter of hours**. By 2017, numerous examples of this will probably be seen, but it will only be thereafter that it will become standard practice to set up movements around items on the global agenda at a given time, to argue the pros and cons, to measure the support for different global movements and to put new items on the agenda.
8. **The move towards minorities** which is already at work in developed information societies such as Finland is set to gain momentum after 2017. When there will no longer be “a large majority” which in any general and satisfactory sense would reflect, for example, the “Finnish view” in Finland and express it reasonably well, the search will begin for methods and societal solutions that will better cater for societal diversity. A downright necessity to devise models for **a democracy of minorities** will emerge. In all likelihood, in a few decades this will really start to impact on societal solutions. In particular, the democratic ethos of the prosperous elite in society will be put to the test.
9. In the long term, a new form of societal thinking may be learnt: **society is actually plural**. Laws and agreements will develop over time so as to allow very different lifestyles to co-exist in the same society. Society will be a system based on trust (a society of trust) which comprises several relatively autonomous subsystems. At the same time, it is part of a broader European and world system. *Systems intelligence* will become a buzzword among societal theorists.
10. Associated with this phenomenon will be **simultaneous presence** in many tribes and the **short-term nature** of activities (projects). In a few decades’ time, the idea of lifelong membership of a party and of voting for the same party again and again will seem strange to younger generations. One consequence will be the disappearance of unnecessary ceremony and rigidity when implementing democracy. Democracy may become fun.
11. The debate on shortening the **electoral cycle** and introducing flexibility into it, which will become more vocal before 2017, may chalk up its first result in *the reduction of the term of office of the Finnish president* from six years to four.²⁰⁰ A similar debate will be conducted into the terms of office of inter alia the Parliament and local councils.
12. The old model of agrarian and industrial society of exercising democracy by voting at elections **on a given day in a predefined physical place** at the local school will vanish soon after 2017 at the latest. By then, people will be so used

to mobile functions in all aspects of life that they will also wish to express their views on society wherever and whenever they see fit. Initially, there may be a shift from a single polling day to a more loosely defined polling period – for example, over two weeks – and this may progress to even more flexible models later.

13. **Models of intelligent voting.** New technology will give wings to the implementation of *models of continuous voting* and *the diversification of electoral influence*. Models will be tried out that allow people to give a weighting to their votes and give plus and minus votes to candidates – and to do so when they consider it necessary, and not according to rigid cycles defined by society. There will be even further developed models, such as to allow people to adopt positions, without indirect representatives and on a regular basis, on important societal issues on the basis of a proposal made by the legislative drafting apparatus (“daily referendums”). *The boundaries will not be set by technology; but by how interested people are in serving as “on-call citizen commentators”.*
14. The industrial mindset with its dependence on time and place will finally be dismantled, probably not until after 2017. **A new understanding of time and place** will then apply to all people, both active politicians and citizens in the exercise of societal influence as in everything else, at work and in one’s private life. New models will be demanded and developed to enable people to express their views wherever they happen to be and whenever is convenient to them. People will have taken **instantism** on board, i.e. the expectation that things have to happen immediately and queuing is not recognised. The nature of different elections and the operating methods of the Parliament and other representative institutions will also move in the direction of temporal flexibility, lack of dependence on place and instantism. *Over time, the Parliament will meet physically in the same place less and less often.*
15. **Virtual democracy, virtual governance and the population.** The virtualisation of democracy and governance will advance before 2017, but it will go further still thereafter. It is very possible that, for example, the concept of municipality becomes virtual and disappears in the long term. Physical factors will be highly significant in some matters – the child day-care centre has to be close to home, while in others the significance of place will be lost altogether – administration, for example. The attitudes and capacity of different population groups, the elderly and others, to act in a virtual world will be different, and this will affect the speed at which virtual democracy and governance advance.
16. In the very long term, **a wholly virtual democracy** may increasingly sideline traditional geographical *arenas of activity*. Ever more intelligent information and communication will develop so that the importance of traditional national and other boundaries and of operational levels (arenas of activity), not just in economy but also in societal influence, will decline and ultimately disappear in many issues. In virtual space, the concept of *place* as we have learnt to understand it will lose its significance; virtual space has no geographical

boundaries. These boundaries will be replaced by a *virtual universe* or several of them. These will be arenas of activity, some smaller, some larger, where influence on societal development can be exercised in different ways, and where genuine societal decisions and agreements are made.

17. Ever more intelligent information and communication technology will be exploited in many different ways in societal decision-making. For example, at the disposal of political decision-makers will be societal *expert systems* capable of fluent communication and which automatically ensure the consistency of political decisions. This means that *political players will no longer be able to make illogical decisions by accident*. It will still be possible to make such decisions, but only consciously. The systems will be able inter alia to carry out immediate development evaluations of the long-term consequences of societal decisions. Perfect systems will, of course, not exist, just as perfection does not exist in life in general, but expert systems will substantially improve the information base for decision-making.
18. ***Biosociety and fusion society***. Gene therapies to treat diseases and human genetic enhancement will become routine in the future. A growing proportion of food will be genetically modified. In the next few decades, a sizeable part of the debates held and decisions taken around democracy will focus on *ethical* debates on the limits of use of biotechnologies and other new technologies. In the very long term, it is possible that people will have been changed through genetic enhancement to such an extent that the debate will focus inter alia on who exactly falls *within the scope of democratic influence*, with what rights and in what circumstances.
19. ***The party-political map***. It is easy to forget that the party system in its current form began to develop as late as just a hundred years ago. The legendary Forssa party conference of the Finnish labour movement was held in 1903. As such, the parties of today have not “always” been around, nor will they always be.

The existing parties do not wish to relinquish their positions, nor are there any natural new foundations for general parties based on large, homogeneous groups of people. There may be some flashes in the pan, running on a mandate of xenophobia, but they will be weak and very short-lived. After 2017 at the latest, the party system born of agrarian and industrial society will begin to change. The parties will do their duty as agents of representative democracy for a long time to come, dominating the Parliament and other representative bodies for several more parliamentary terms, but the parties will nonetheless wither and die over the decades.

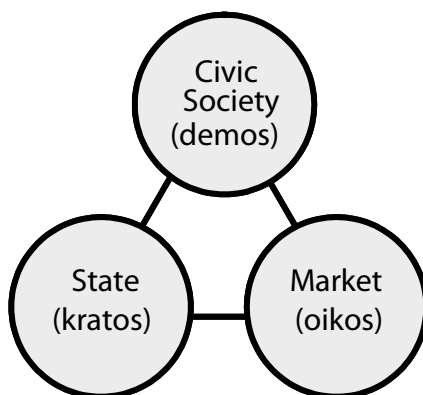
The dividing lines between different schools of thought in decision-making in representative bodies will follow the traditional party lines less and less often, and it will not even be possible to say “what it would make sense for party X to think” about many new issues. Frustration and boredom will spread – “Why on earth should we go through all this, just to be seen to have power and to

get to be a minister?” At elections people get through the party lists whose burning conviction is fading away, as is their commitment to the party. At the same time, people will form different kinds of ideological and interest groups, which spring from the way in which modern life is organised and which are often short-lived and virtual. Models of direct participation and exercise of virtual influence will develop in many ways. In the course of time, flagging parties will take up their well-earned and hallowed place in the history of nations.

20. ***New ideologies?*** It has been stated above that, on the one hand, the history of ideologies has not run its course, since the human race has not degenerated to such a level of stupidity, and that, on the other hand, predicting such ideologies is extremely difficult. Ideologies are born and develop out of the ideas being challenged in their day *according to a self-organising logic*. In the decades to come, we will undoubtedly see wholly new ideological worlds and old ones being applied to new circumstances and appearing in new versions – *meritocracy as an ideology, technocracy, neo-Marxism, neo-liberalism, religions as societal ideologies, systems humanism, instant hedonism, transhumanism, biosociety movements and parties, ideologies of virtual intelligence, Potterism, etc.* There will surely be others too, as the future is always full of surprises, but that is especially true of issues of this kind.
21. In the scenario of civilised and peaceful development, ***global democracy*** will be as natural in 2107 as, for example, political decision-making in the Finnish Parliament is today. It is highly likely that by then applicable decision-making models and technologies will not yet have been devised, but a clear trend along those lines will already be discernible.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions based on the study which has gone before will now be presented, as will proposals from the author of the report as to actions that can be taken in Finland now and in the near future to promote democracy.



Reinforcing civil society – the young

Democracy is a demanding system of societal governance. The basis of a genuine democracy is a functioning *civil society*, in whatever age, in whatever conditions and with whatever technologies and operating models the democracy is being exercised. A true democracy always operates from the bottom up and places great demands on civil society: the ability and will of citizens to engage with issues of society, to form views about them, to interact with others, to argue, to be inspired and find support for their own ideas. The continued development of the basis of civil society is vital for a democratic society and will be so in the future context of the information society. *A person has to train to be a player in democracy at an early age.* Each generation has to study the principles of democracy and civilisation right from the basics, since they are not passed on in the genes. This process starts in homes and schools. An authoritarian, undemocratic family or school can produce obedient subjects, but not active and creative citizens of civil society who respect themselves and others.

Proposal 1

Care must be taken to ensure that people are trained in the principles of democracy while they are still young, and young people should be encouraged to engage in their own experiments at developing democracy. This is not a concrete proposal; rather, it is above all a matter of *societal attitude, which should be transparent everywhere* and, if necessary, involve economic support to societal activism on the part of young people. Social studies lessons in school are necessary, but they are not enough; instead, young

people have to be allowed to develop on a personal level and to experiment with their own democratic operating models. *Youth councils* and similar activities are a good way of teaching young people about traditional ways of exercising influence, and these should also be supported by society in the future. The reputation of *school and university democracy* in the 1970s is far from outstanding, but it can provide good ideas for young people to participate in the development of their own school, for example.²⁰¹

However, at the same time it must be remembered that councils, boards and committees are ready-made models offered by adults to young people, and as such they are “second best” solutions for the future. Society has to be prepared, and needs to have the economic resources, to support the learning, development and application of a self-organising democracy that takes young people themselves as its starting point. This will probably produce models which would never have been spawned by an adult imagination and which can later be applied throughout society. The creativity shown by young people in their Internet behaviour is promising. *In the form of premises, equipment, education and economic support, society and the municipalities in particular should give young people opportunities to develop and fulfil their democratic nationality using not just traditional solutions, but also in creative new ways which feel natural to them, such as by creating electronic means of exercising influence on the Internet and the virtual world in general.*

Supporting democracy that measures up to the individual

People participate on a voluntary basis in all kinds of activities if those activities interest them, are close to their hearts, and participating in them is easy and rewarding. Parents are involved in activities at child day care centres and school, while sports associations are run on a voluntary basis. In Finland, there are thousands of associations and people eagerly express their opinions in different virtual forums, be it on the subject of EU politics, the Eurovision song contest or anything else of interest to people. Models for exercising societal influence at different levels, such as in the municipalities, could be developed in a direction that would make exercising societal influence easy and rewarding, even fun. *Futures workshops* developed by Professor Bob Jung back in the 1950s – the original idea for which was actually to “democratise the future” and make it everyone’s business – can be held on issues that interest people at local level. With the new technology of the information society, these could also be organised virtually on themes which affect a limited group of citizens living around the country. *Futures workshops*, or in the modern context *futures studios*, are a cheap and easy means of getting people to participate in the exercise of concrete influence and to feel that they are genuine members of a demos and to be involved in developing the welfare society in the direction that they consider worth moving in. In turn, this can inspire people to activate their membership using other methods of democracy as well, such as by voting in elections.

Proposal 2

A culture of *futures studios* should be launched. Studios can be conducted at local level, which requires competent leaders to run the sessions and these will need training. At the same time, the development of *virtual futures studios* appropriate for the information society can be launched. These can address societal and everyday issues of interest to people and are not tied to a place.

Citizens' debates on major futures issues – futures panels

A broad debate in Finnish society should be held on the major developments affecting *the foundations of democratic society*, such as *the long-term effects of globalisation*, the conditions according to which the “*Some Brother is watching you*” ubiquitous society is developed, the governance of *the society of risk*, the significance of *the society of trust*, and the prospects for *societal stages subsequent to the information society*. A democratic debate on the value objectives of development would also be desirable: *what progress and a good life in the future will entail, both in everyday terms and at the macro-level of society*.

Proposal 3

The Committee for the Future will launch the practice of *futures panels* in Finnish society. Futures panels are well-prepared, public citizens' debates on key societal futures themes. It is important that not only elites in society participate in such panels; instead, they should be an attempt at a debating between grass-roots civil society, experts and political and economic decision-makers.²⁰²

Futures debates in Parliament and the role of the Committee for the Future

In modern democratic society, it should go without saying that in the Finnish Parliament and other representative bodies no sets of decisions with far-reaching, long-term effects should go through without thorough-going, impartial *futures assessments*, which will spark off a broad citizens' debate before the decision-making takes place. On the other hand, citizens' debates can actually guide the formation of futures assessments by highlighting key societal issues.

Developing futures work into a genuine part of parliamentary culture requires the status of futures debates to be raised, for example, in such a way that, subject to certain conditions, *the Parliament commits itself to adopting a position* on futures material produced on a broad subject area. (Such a model was applied in the Netherlands back in the 1990s, for instance). In order to guarantee sufficiently multi-faceted debate, care should be taken to ensure that there are alternative ways and bodies to produce futures assessments.

The Committee for the Future has an essential role in the Parliament as a catalyst for futures assessments and in developing the practice of futures debates in the Parliament.

Proposal 4

The Committee for the Future should work actively so that a practice is adopted in Finland of always drawing up high-quality, impartial *futures reports* before far-reaching sets of decisions with long-term effects are pushed through. Futures reports can be commissioned from different bodies and *the Parliament is expected to take up a position on them based on preparatory work by the Committee for the Future*. Adopting a position means more than just a general debate, but rather tabling a legislative proposal.

Reinforcing civil society – citizens’ initiatives

One unexploited method of reinforcing civil society and citizens’ commitment to societal participation is provided by *citizens’ initiatives*, by way of which a sufficient number of citizens can place societal issues that they consider to be important on the Parliament’s agenda. It is for society to reflect on what a “sufficient number” might be; if, for example, one percent of the adult population were to be used as a criterion, the minimum number of names for launching a citizens’ initiative in Finland would be about 40 000.²⁰³ It ought to be possible for names for citizens’ initiatives to be gathered on e.g. the Internet.²⁰⁴

Proposal 5

The introduction of the *citizens’ initiative* in Finland should be explored and prepared for.

Preventing the digital democracy divide

The growing use of the new technologies of the information society, email, the Internet and mobile devices, in the exercise of societal influence should be examined not just from the perspective of capable young people, but also from that of other groups, including that of an ageing population. There are people whose basic capacity for embracing new information and communication technology is more modest and whose experience of such technology is slight. The ongoing improvement in readiness to embrace the information society among all citizens is a prerequisite for preventing a *digital divide* from opening up. In the future, as an increasing proportion of societal influence is exercised virtually, there is the threat of a *digital democracy divide* emerging.

Proposal 6

In implementing different information society programmes and information society literacy measures, care should be taken to ensure that *all citizens* have the wherewithal to participate fully in the exercise of societal influence in the future too, when an ever greater proportion of that influence will be exercised *virtually*. *Broadband for every household* in the near future is an appropriate objective for Finland. In the future,

every citizen should have as easy access to the information and influence highways as to asphalt highways, and society should take measures to safeguard this if necessary.

The rights of future generations

Future generations form a group in society that has its own interests. No body in contemporary society represents those interests, even though the ability of modern society to take far-reaching, long-term decisions is greater than at any earlier stage of society.

In contemporary society, the Consumer Ombudsman and his agency defend the interests of consumers, while the Equality Ombudsman monitors the achievement of equality. An Ombudsman for Children has been operating for a few years now.

Future Generations Representation, (TUSE in Finnish), could be a body that is specialised in assessing the consequences of current societal and economic action for future generations and in representing their interests. TUSE could sit on committees, issue opinion and if necessary take public players and companies to court for breaching the rights of future generations. TUSE would not be a traditional agency, but it would exploit to the greatest possible extent the information and communications technologies of the modern information society.

There could also be unbiased consideration of whether specific mentions of the *fundamental rights of future generations* should be made in the Finnish constitution. It would send out an important signal about the scheme of values of Finnish democracy and would be a model for the rest of the world as well. Furthermore, it would assist TUSE in its work.

Proposal 7

TUSE should be founded in Finland, *a representation for future generations* functioning as virtually as possible, which has a right and an obligation to act on behalf of future generations by representing them in society, speaking with their voice and, if necessary, initiating legal proceedings in the name of the unborn.

Proposal 8

There should be an examination of how the fundamental rights of future generations should be written into the Finnish constitution – and they should then be written into it.

Relieving generational tension

Society should be made aware of the fact that a growth in tension between generations and a decline in internal cohesion in society are real possibilities. Society is developing in a direction in which the concepts of realities of adults and young people are further apart than ever before. The influence of the ageing baby boom generation is growing in representative decision-making in the Parliament and other representative bodies (councils, boards); on the other hand, younger generations active in society and economy have real economic and technological influence, and they tend towards non-rep-

representative exercise of social influence to a greater extent than the older generations. At worst, the legitimacy of representative democracy could be called into question if the decisions taken democratically by representative bodies are not enforced. At best, *democracy will support a multigenerational society*, whose members of all ages consider themselves to be valued citizens.

Proposal 9

The Committee for the Future should launch a project aiming to explore means of preventing *a generational gulf from opening up* and to reinforce the development of *multi-generational democracy*.

Online voting in elections to become routine

In Finland, which is renowned for its state-of-the-art technology, it would be possible to apply information and communication technology to exercise democracy in a considerably more technologically advanced manner than at present. It may be considered an ambitious but also realistic aim that *by 2017 Finns will be able to vote in all elections not only by traditional means but also electronically online – and while on the move, from anywhere in the world*. In many areas of life, people are more used to conducting their affairs on the Internet, and online voting could reverse the trends towards lower turn-outs at elections and make voting levels go up.

At the same time, it should be remembered that there is a large group of people in society who for different reasons do not want to or cannot use such technological opportunities and they have to be able to exercise their democratic rights using the traditional methods for a long time to come.

With a concerted effort to develop online voting, Finnish society could acquire expertise and experience which could be exploited later in European Union elections and at global level. Even though elections to the world parliament will not loom in the immediate future, virtual exercise of influence against the backdrop of a peaceful scenario is one of the key opportunities to promote global democracy. Finland is the right place for a trial run before other countries have a go.

Proposal 10

A clear societal objective should be set, which all political parties will hopefully be able to support, that *in all significant elections held in Finland – parliamentary elections, presidential elections, elections to the European Parliament and municipal elections – it is possible to vote not only by traditional means but also electronically online* before the centenary anniversary of Finnish independence in 2017.

Proposal 11

We should work actively within the European Union so that in the longer term *European-wide online voting* can be introduced in elections to the European Parliament and possibly to new EU institutions.

Proposal 12

At the same time, Finland should prepare to be a pioneer and to take the initiative also in the promotion of *global democracy* in the form of electronic voting in the very long-term future. It is wholly realistic to think that over the next hundred years at least a sizeable proportion of the human race will be able to participate in the exercise of global influence through elections. This project has to be kicked off somewhere in the world.

Virtual citizens' referendums

In the same way as online voting in elections should quickly become routine, it would be possible to conduct *virtual citizens' referendums* in the next few years on *national* issues as well as at *local* level. Electronic participation in citizens' votes would bring down the mental barriers to participation in the exercise of societal influence, especially for young people. There are grounds also for maintaining the traditional way of participating in citizens' referendums at the ballot-box for the immediate future.

As with the elections, greater benefit will be derived from virtual citizens' referendums *at the supranational level*. It is for Finland to be active and to suggest trial referendums and their introduction in the European Union and in the long term also at global level.

Furthermore, virtual citizens' referendums based *on other than territorial grounds* could be tried out. "Other grounds" could be, for example, "15–17-year-olds" or "foreign nationals in Finland". These trials can be carried out over the next ten years. Similarly, expertise can be generated in Finland that can be applied later at the European level and more widely.

Proposal 13

Citizens' referendums should be held on municipal and nationwide issues so as to allow for opinions to be expressed not only by traditional voting methods but also *electronically*.

Proposal 14

Based on the Finnish experience, the introduction of *virtual citizens' referendums* should be actively promoted *in the European Union* and in the long term also *at global level*.

Proposal 15

There should be trialling of virtual citizens' referendums in which the right to participate is defined *on other than territorial grounds*.

Public meetings online

Virtual meetings that are *open to all* and organised by authorities such as *ministries* and *municipalities*, like the *web-chats* run by the U.S. State Department, are worth organising in Finland as well. Virtual forums arranged on important subjects of interest to citizens may develop into an everyday part of a culture of democratic civil debate and influence. It is essential that these are turned into standard practice in society and are not one-off events.

Proposal 16

The Committee for the Future should work actively to initiate a practice of *virtual meetings open to all citizens*. The first round could address key issues being dealt with by the government and ministries. Virtual meetings can also be held on, for example, municipal themes (“electronic town meetings”).

Virtual administration

As far as all sectors of society and the interaction between them are concerned (the need for cross-cutting administration, systems perspective), *virtual administration* should be actively promoted in every respect. Furthermore, Finland could take the initiative in terms of developing models of virtual administration in the European Union.

Proposal 17

The development of *virtual administration* should be accelerated so that citizens will be able to handle *all their important dealings with the authorities electronically* by 2017.

Establishing the virtual constituency

Geographical constituencies in parliamentary election came into existence at a time when, for example, members of parliament from Lapland travelled to the “powers-that-be in Helsinki” to represent the northern province. Information on the political situation for provinces and on the needs of the provinces for the “nerve centre” flowed slowly with the members of parliament. However, the importance of regional parochialism is waning, and in the present day the home town of the most influential members of parliament is basically irrelevant when political positions are being adopted. The older generation still considers it important that there should be a representative of their own province in the Parliament, but a more typical way for younger age groups to fulfil themselves also as members of society is increasingly the virtual way, independent of boundaries.

There would indeed be justification for giving people the possibility to join a *virtual constituency* instead of a geographical one, whereupon they could vote for candidates standing in that virtual constituency. These candidates could come from anywhere provided that they fulfil the criteria for election to the Parliament. The voters and can-

didates that wish to stick to the old geographical constituencies could continue to do so. In the longer term, geographical constituencies may disappear.

Proposal 18

A virtual constituency should be set up from which twenty members of parliament are elected. This could be done for the first time at the parliamentary elections in 2011. A voter will be able to register as a member of a virtual constituency, whereupon he would at the same time surrender his membership of a geographical constituency. The parties and other bodies fielding candidates will nominate candidates in a virtual constituency in the same way as in traditional constituencies. Where the candidate comes from is of no relevance.²⁰⁵

Flexible voting cycles and smart voting

In a democracy, citizens should be able to influence matters that affect them *on an on-going basis*. Finland could act as a pioneer in trying out ideas of *flexible voting cycles* and even *continuous voting*. For example, in individual pilot municipalities, residents could correct their voting decisions during the elected term of office.

It could be imagined that part of the seats in Parliament, at first a cautious ten percent, could be filled across the nation as “floating seats”, whereby between elections citizens could express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what the parties and the members of parliament are doing by transferring their vote from one person to the next. Changes in levels of support would be reflected directly in terms of relative changes in the number of floating seats – or taking a more conservative approach initially, in that changes in support would change the number of seats held by each party at half-yearly intervals.²⁰⁶

These and other similar ideas should be explored and tried out with an open mind. It would be natural for different experiments in *smart voting* to be combined with such trials: votes could be weighted on an ongoing basis and be given pluses and minuses.

Proposal 19

Thoroughgoing and unbiased exploratory work should be launched into the possibilities for implementing *flexible voting cycles*, *continuous voting*, *smart voting* and other models for improving democracy, and for trials in municipal and parliamentary elections.

Long-term electoral programmes

In a democracy, parties can be required to set out *a long-term electoral programme with a vision* for citizens to evaluate. Parties have got into the habit of presenting anydyne programmes so that they please as many people as possible and annoy as few as possible. However, it is not impossible to steer the customs of societal debate in such a direction that, for as long as parties are significant players in democracy, they are expected in all elections to present their long-term electoral programmes including

target-oriented visions and strategies for achieving them. Defining visions also means taking up a position on ideological issues, which tend to get obscured by the debate on short-term political issues of the day. Voters have the right to demand that *light is shed on policy differences*, a purpose for which visions are ideally suited.

Proposal 20

This is a petitionary motion. On their own initiative and supported by citizens' debates and the influential *media*, the political parties could adopt the habit of presenting their *long-term programmes* at elections, complete with *visions and strategies*, for citizens to evaluate.

Futures models and expert systems to assess long-term consequences

When parties and other players in society present their long-term programmes for the future (with their visions and strategies, see previous point), the overall effect that they will bring about in a complicated modern society is not obvious; indeed, these programmes may well even lead to consequences that are the opposite of what was intended.

However, the consequences of implementing a vision can be assessed *using methods from futures research and economics*. The routine use of such modelling, not least in the context of elections, would promote democracy. The parties could make use of these models when preparing and presenting their electoral programmes. The models would help to shed light on the significance of these programmes and the differences between them using systematic assessments and calculations. If this were to happen, even the citizens would know which policy to vote for better than they do today in basing themselves on personal *impressions*.

In practice, such a new and democracy-reinforcing practice would presuppose resources being made available for research. For example, the job description of the *Government Institute for Economic Research (VATT)* could be extended to include carrying out long-term futures assessments and calculations based on different policy programmes and developing models for that purpose.

In conjunction with the development of futures models, it would be possible to develop as a support to parliamentary decision-making *expert systems* which serve as systems for assessing the consistency of alternative decisions. These could be turned into a routine part of societal decision-making ("inconsistency is possible, but not by accident").

Proposal 21

The Committee for the Future should take the initiative to get the *Government Institute for Economic Research (VATT)* to develop models of modern futures research and econometrics that would assist in *systematically analysing the effects of long-term policy programmes* and thus give citizens the possibility of making genuine choices between policies at elections.

Proposal 22

VATT could also develop *virtual expert systems*, which could help in assessing the relationship between the consequences of planned political decisions and their intended objectives, i.e. the consistency of decision-making.

The proposed models can in no way be perfect, but even in their imperfection they can improve the basic elements of political decision-making.

Observation of emerging issues

A futures-oriented decision-making culture in whatever system requires a constant awareness of major future trends and other megaphenomena. Furthermore, modern futures thinking also stresses the need to observe *emerging issues* and to assess them systematically and regularly. The Parliament is not a research institute, but the Committee for the Future could take on the task of creating a system which would help to collect systematically the emerging issues from different fields of life and which are crucial from the point of view of the long-term development of society, so that not just politicians, researchers and experts in different fields but also every citizen using modern technology could contribute to feeding those emerging issues. At regular intervals, for example, once a year, a *public futures forum* could be organised, at which the most interesting emerging issues could be assessed.

Proposal 23

The Committee for the Future should take the initiative to create an *observation system for emerging issues* to be used by the societal decision-making system. It should be set up as an open system, so that citizens can also bring issues to its attention. On a regular basis once a year, a well-prepared and open *futures forum* could be organised, at which the issues which have emerged are assessed, conclusions are drawn and further measures are initiated.

Visions for Europe and the world

At least as significant as the goal-driven visions at the level of the nation state are *the dreams of a world to strive for* at European level and globally. *European values in the world are unlikely to be promoted by anyone other than Europeans.* The Finnish model of democracy is a good basis on which to construct broader goal-based visions of the future.

The beginning of the new millennium has been characterised more by Huntington's tensions between cultures than by tolerance and the models of a flourishing multicultural world set out in many futures assessments. Finns are in a particularly good position for being impartial players in the promotion of global consensus and developing *operating models for global democracy.* This opportunity should not be wasted. *In the*

long term, 100 years into the future, some kind of global democracy is almost as much of a necessity as ecologically sustainable development is.

Proposal 24

Players in Finnish society should actively create and promote European and even broader *democratic visions*, not least within the European Union.

Proposal 25

The Committee for the Future should initiate preparatory work with the long-term objective of sketching out a model for the gradual development of global democracy. Finnish political players can promote the achievement of *global democracy* within the European Union and the UN. While the idea may seem unrealistic in 2007, some kind of global democracy will be almost a necessity in 2107, if only to save the global ecosystem.

Democracy is more a process than some kind of static and unchanging model which someone a lot wiser than ourselves devised in the dim and distant past, and which has since been enshrined as some fixed article of faith to be followed like a ritual from one election to the next and between elections, from here to eternity. The principles of democracy – human rights, freedom of the individual, equality, an equal right to influence the decision-making that affects one, freedom of expression and the right to join forces with others in order to pursue one's own ends, real mental and material resources for being an active citizen – will be values in their own right in the future too. People should feel that they are living in a society which they can call their own.

Technological, economic and societal development and, for example, the issue of what effects people are capable of causing in the environment with their economic and technosystems and actually do cause, will affect how the ideals of democracy can most sensibly be put into practice each time. The western concept of democracy continues to be marked by the paradigm of the industrial age, even though in many respects we are already living in the age of the information society.²⁰⁷

Democracy is perhaps at its best when society lives within one paradigm (or reference framework); on the other hand, major changes to the frame of reference, such as the transition from the industrial era to the age of information societies, are more problematic. It is easier to draw up new versions of the same mindset than to change basic ways of thinking in a revolutionary manner.

This report has shown that we are currently at a real watershed, which demands a radically new way of thinking on the part of all supporters of democracy. One of the points made above is that the concept of the demos is changing from being centred on the nation state towards multiple demoi, big and small, even global, and towards virtual tribes on the other hand. Technology offers means to exercise influence in a quite different way from as little as a few decades ago, and the younger generation in particular is using these new possibilities actively. The arenas of democracy are many, not just in geographical terms, but also, for example, in terms of the direct and representative exercise of influence.

Different future scenarios can be envisaged in the configuration of *demos* (people) – *kratos* (power, state) – *oikos* (economy, market). How strong will civil society be, and what about the state (coercion) and the market on which we compete? The Nordic model has represented a combination of all three, while the “American dream”, for example, has traditionally stressed competition and an individual taking responsibility for his own survival in that competition (the settlers are the architects of their own fortune). The models of real socialism stress the coercion of the state without any genuine *demos* or market. In some Muslim societies, the *demos* is predominant in the sense that, instead of the state or the market, the cohesion that holds society together stems from fundamentalist religion, the law is religious Islamic law, and not the set of agreements that people themselves make for themselves, as a democracy would require. In those countries, the religious *demos* completely dominates the state and the market.

It is easy to see that any direction whatsoever could gain strength in the future, combinations of directions could be seen or blocks formed, whereupon strongly divergent systems could be seen on the globe in the future.

In essence, what is at issue at this watershed of our times and the confusion it is causing, is the transformation of the mindset of the industrial age, based on (nation) states, into models of thinking for globalising information societies, which cannot fail to impact on concepts of future democracy and the forms it could take.

Development is self-organising and cannot be forced. More important than trying to decide now what the model of democracy will be in 2057 is ensuring that the best possible preconditions are in place for people themselves to steer democracy in the direction that they desire, as fully-fledged members of civil society.

However, objectives and visions can be put forward and argued in favour of. We as individuals have a binding right to dream of a good future. The former Czech president Václav Havel in the early 1990s expressed the view that humanity is moving into a new age, in which the importance of citizens and civil society will be pronounced and which will be typified by a very new brand of *global ethics*. This may be considered a highly necessary and desirable development.

In order to be able to function, a future world with a life of value in human terms, in which democracy is the prevailing system of society and respect for human rights is taken for granted everywhere, and which is in step with ecologically sustainable development, socially just, scientifically highly advanced, culturally creative and economically efficient, requires both a strong civil society and widespread and deeply held global ethics.

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Annex: Experts and steering group of Committee for the Future

In the list below (in alphabetical order) figure the experts who in different ways – email queries and messages, personal conversations, participation in brainstorming and sessions of conferences, submitting material, commenting on the report – have influenced the report.

Mining Counsellor Krister Ahlström (Finland)
Dr. Walter Anderson (USA)
Professor Wendell Bell (USA)
Dr. Clement Bezold (USA)
Professor Olavi Borg (Finland)
Professor Riccardo Cinquegrani (Italy)
Director Joe Coates (USA)
Professor William Crossman (USA)
Professor Jim Dator (USA)
Researcher Natalie Dian (Sweden)
Dr. István Dienes (Hungary)
Director Jerry Glenn (USA)
Dr. Fabienne Goux-Baudiment (France)
Professor Linda Groff (USA)
Professor William Halal (USA)
Professor Bernd Hamm (Germany)
Mining Counsellor Gustav von Hertzen (Finland)
Professor Pekka Himanen (Finland)
Professor Sohail Inayatullah (Pakistan-Australia)
Research Professor Jaakko Kiander (Finland)
Dr. Osmo Kuusi (Finland)
Researcher, M.Sc.(Tech.) Risto Linturi (Finland)
Professor Eleonora Masini (Italy)
Professor Peter Mettler (Germany)
Dr. Rauli Mickelsson (Finland)
Professor Kazuo Mizuta (Japan)
Researcher Takuya Murata (Japan)
Director Ruben Nelson (Canada)
Researcher Aleksu Neuvonen (Finland)
Dr. Maija-Riitta Ollila (Finland)
Professor Eero Paloheimo (Finland)
Director Risto E. J. Penttilä (Finland)
M.Sc. (Ec.) Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland)
Professor Esa Saarinen (Finland)
Researcher Yongseok Seo (Korea)

Professor Bart van Steenbergen (The Netherlands)
Researcher Guido Viik (Australia)
Dr. Paula Tiihonen (Finland)
Professor Lech W. Zacher (Poland)

The Committee for the Future appointed a steering group for the *Democracy and Future* project which comprised the following members:

Member of Parliament Kalevi Olin, Chairman.
Member of Parliament Anne Huotari
Member of Parliament Kyösti Karjula
Member of Parliament Jyrki J.J. Kasvi
Member of Parliament Jyrki Katainen
Member of Parliament Astrid Thors

Of the civil servants working for Committee, Committee Counsel Paula Tiihonen, researcher Ulrica Gabrielson and Dr. Osmo Kuusi were involved in the project throughout.

Endnotes

1. v. Love 2004-2005
2. cf. Dator 2006
3. This does not mean that decisions are not actually made in science. News from 24.8.2006: The International Astronomy Union (IAU) has published a new definition for “planet”, as a result of which Pluto drops off the list of actual planets and will be classified in the future as a “**dwarf planet**”. From now on, it is “a Pluto-like object” that revolves around the Sun. A lively discussion took place at the IAU before the decision was taken. Our view of the world is not turned upside down by this, but many textbooks and maps will have to be re-printed, and astrologers’ tales retold.
4. For the idea of possible clashes between virtual nations, I am grateful to MP Jyrki Kasvi (Dr. Tech.)
5. The author of this report took part in the conference as a speaker and also chaired a round table discussion on the subject.
6. Mannermaa 2005a, v. also Mannermaa – Sydänmaanlakka 2006
7. v. <http://www.wfs.org/>.
8. Democracy and Futures ... 2006
9. Politicians often get into difficulties when dealing with issues that are genuinely complex and difficult to grasp and explain. While an honest politician tries to provide an in-depth explanation of the interactions between issues, a carefree populist, if necessary by twisting the truth, will “straighten things out” in order to produce sensational simplifications that a superficial media eagerly passes on to “the nation”.
10. One unpleasant thought is that crowd-pulling visions have been presented by such figures as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, thankfully also by Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. In a modern democracy, there is a need for visionary debate to take place amid the self-organising debates and processes of civil society. Individuals often have their own specific role in devising new visions, and it is somewhat surprising that in the age of a personality-based media visionary people with new inspiring visions of the future (“I HAVE A DREAM!”) and the political programmes to implement them have not been forthcoming. Media forums would be on offer all the time, but there would appear to be a shortage of ideas.
11. MP and Professor Erkki Pulliainen has set out in an interesting way the challenges facing members of parliament as holders of representative power in the new situation of the “MP3 world of political cyborgia”, Pulliainen 2006.
12. In the United States voting machines have already been used in many elections over the years. Voting machines have also been tried out in e.g. India. However, it should be noted that using machines to cast and count votes is a different matter from actually voting online.
13. I would like to thank Prof. Esa Saarinen for bringing the ingenious concept of *systems intelligence* to my attention; he has developed it together with Prof. Raimo Hämmäläinen and his students (v. Hämmäläinen-Saarinen 2004 and 2006).

14. Fukuyama 1992. Fukuyama actually revisited his concepts and declared that development will continue for as long as science advances.
15. Von Herten 2004, 137.
16. The evolutionary approach has been addressed in broader and more theoretical terms in the sources Mannermaa 1991 and 1999.
17. I have described societal development phases and the “wave theory” more fully in my books “*A quantum leap into the future?*” (*Kvanttihyppy tulevaisuuteen?* Mannermaa 1998) and “*From weak signals into a strong future*” (*Heikoista signaaleista vahva tulevaisuus*, Mannermaa 2004).
18. Information society is a compromise concept. Its features are described in more detail later in this report.
19. No deterministic law of society prevents, for example, globalisation from stopping next week and moving in the reverse direction, perhaps towards the local agrarian model sketched out by Pentti Linkola. However, there are no grounds for considering such a development to be probable.
20. It is hard to find a precise Finnish equivalent for the concept of emergence. Emergence refers to freshly emerging characteristics which have not existed before and which can be qualitative or quantitative.
21. v. Castells 1996, 1997, 1998.
22. The term “player material” is still used today when talking about an ice hockey team, which might be considered a serious affront to the player’s dignity.
23. Vartia – Ylä-Anttila 2003, 77.
24. v. Suomi ja Eurooppa ..., 1996
25. For example, planning can be carried out – and is already carried out in many global companies – so that the global planning team carries on the work in real time according to the global daily cycle: the same material is worked on first in Europe, then in the United States, Asia, etc.
26. Osaava, avautuva ja uudistuva Suomi... 2004, 14–15.
27. Shen 2004.
28. The author of this report was a member of a delegation of Finnish futures researchers to China at the invitation of the CAFIU (Chinese Association for International Understanding) in 1985 and 1991 and also took part in the world conference of futures studies in Beijing in 1988. The report on the 1985 trip included the mention: “China is like one huge building site.”
29. Toimintaympäristökuvaus... 2005, 12.
30. Flannery 2006 provides a recent and extensive examination of the current state and future prospects for the global environment. Gore 2006 offers good, reader-friendly material.
31. Let it be remembered that economic growth and material growth are two separate issues. Mannermaa 1993 provides more extensive analysis of the theme of growth and global threats.
32. Meadows et al. 2005.
33. Mannermaa – Inayatullah – Slaughter 1994.

34. Masini 2005.
35. van der Veer 2003, 185–186.
36. Generally speaking, for as long as the author of this report has been involved in futures research, i.e. 25 years, the immaterial, mental growth phase has been hailed as being “about to happen”. In following this repetition, I am reminded of those bits of paper that come about from time and time and which one has read ever since one has been able to read: “Jesus is coming. Are you ready?”
37. Inglehart – Baker 2001.
38. Inglehart uses the term “post-industrial”, which is less usual nowadays. In my view, concepts beginning with pre-, post- etc are rather unsuccessful replacement terms, which have been invented in the absence of anything better.
39. Renowned scenario expert Peter Schwartz and his colleagues put forward an optimistic view of the *monoculturalism* versus *multiculturalism* problem in our global future: “Culture critics in many countries regularly express their concerns about the effect of the American media on their own culture. But we are not moving towards a future in which one homogeneous global culture would suffocate the diversity of great cultures that we find around the world. People are always worried that the advance of a global culture will mean a future in which everybody just eats at *McDonald’s* and is glued to the TV for re-runs of the *Simpsons*. That simply will not happen. We will see the emergence of a sophisticated, complex and varied culture: it will enhance the world’s cultures rather than crush them. All the signs from the early 1980s onwards suggest that local cultures will flourish alongside the spread of globalisation. People in Provence are just as strongly attached to their 800-year-old traditions in terms of food, singing and dress, as well as to their myths and dialect, as they have always been – perhaps even more attached now than before. They will still be able to appreciate those old habits while at the same time scanning Benetton advertisements in newspapers,” see Schwartz – Leyden – Hyatt 1999, 233-234.
40. v. <http://www.newamericancentury.org/>.
41. v. World Resource Institute:
http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/data_tables/pop1_2005.pdf.
42. Numerous other names have been used to describe this societal phase, depending on the basic approach and focus of each presenter: information society, communication and interaction society, automation society, post-industrial society, expert society (meritocracy), service society, learning society, entertainment society, dream society, post-modern society, Third Wave, awareness society, Homo Intelligens society, nanosociety and leisure society. Some buzz concepts from recent years that are associated in particular with economy but that are also understood in a wider sense, are the new economy, attention economy, gossip economy, creative economy, significance economy and participatory economy.
43. Statistics Finland 2003.
44. In understanding the logic behind the development of the information society, we are assisted by Karl Marx and William Ogburn. The primary role of technology in societal development is not a new idea in itself. William Ogburn’s famous theory of the *cultural lag* and the thinking of Karl Marx are known to stress the primary role of change in the material basis of society with respect to cultural and political factors. It is another matter altogether that many people might *wish* that the situation were reversed, and that value debates and objective-setting in society would steer technological development.

The dynamics of change are not dictated exclusively by technology. For example, consumer feedback has an impact on the market and the development of technology, and the interactions between different change processes are complex and multi-directional. This is exactly

what is at stake in the second stage of the information society: people's needs (life-style and consumer models) are of genuine significance when developing the content of services in the information society and in further developing the technology that this content requires. Presumably in the first stage of the next technological revolution – which will perhaps be sparked off by bio-, material and nanotechnologies – technology will play a dominant role in society and economy.

45. When it is stated that the traditional class structure in society is breaking down and that society in general is turning into a mosaic of small groups and neo-tribes, this does not mean that the income and wealth disparities that characterised the social classes of the past will disappear. It is possible that the differences between the rich and the poor will even grow in the future.
46. When it is stated that the traditional class structure in society is breaking down and that society in general is turning into a mosaic of small groups and neo-tribes, this does not mean that the income and wealth disparities that characterised the social classes of the past will disappear. It is possible that the differences between the rich and the poor will even grow in the future.
47. I use the concept of U(biquitous)society merely to clarify the “omnipresent intelligence” aspect of the future development of the information society in the broader sense. The U-society will go down in history as the same kind of flash in the pan as the new economy and the creative economy. However, there is some substance to all of them.
48. <http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubiikkiyhteiskunta>.
49. For more information: <http://www.mintc.fi/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=lvcm/cm/pub/showdoc.p?docid=2080&menuid=161&channelid=69&channelitemid=12319>.
50. “Some Brother” is not an established concept but a term devised by the author. In the name of equality it has already been said that the term “Some Sister” should also be used. No problem, since Finnish is a dynamic and constantly evolving language and no one owns the exclusive rights to words. However, the fact that the concept of “Big Brother” is rather well-known and established militates in favour of the concept of “Some Brother” being used in this context
51. From Amazon.com to the author on 22.2.2006: “Dear Amazon.com Customer, We’ve noticed that customers who have purchased *The World Cafe: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter* by Juanita Brown also purchased books by Daniel Pink. For this reason, you might like to know that Daniel Pink’s *A Whole New Mind : Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* will be released in paperback on March 7, 2006. You can pre-order your copy at a savings of 32 % by following the link below.”
52. Even a layman knows that it is important in psychological and socio-psychological terms to forget. Individuals have to be able to overcome unpleasant events in order to get on with their lives. Communities, such as nations, have to be able to sort out their traumas and leave them behind so that their actions are not paralysed by those traumas.
53. Himanen – Lehto – Mannermaa 2000.
54. “Wandering professionals” is an expression used by American futures researchers. The word “organisation people” is used to mean someone working on a full-time basis in a large organisation.
55. The word “avatar” is used to mean a “mentor” or a person’s “alter ego” operating in virtual space and which can perform tasks on behalf of the person.
56. For more about the new professions of the future, see Ahlqvist 2003, 95–100.

57. The importance of face-to-face contacts should not be downplayed. It is natural for a person to want to discuss with another person around a campfire or table. In politics there is a desire for not everything to be public, confidential discussions have to be entered into behind the scenes. The Finnish Parliament is for now still a social community. In spite of that, it may be considered that virtual solutions will increase. People will definitely find means of engaging in confidential discussion and of satisfying their social needs also in the future. If the Parliament declines as a social community, the MPs will wipe out their social needs deficit in other communities.
58. Nokia has introduced the concept of the *multimedia computer* to describe “portable information and communications centres” that are considerably more complicated than traditional mobile phones.
59. The term “present absenteeism” is not an established term (for example, Google does not recognise it). The idea of “present absenteeism” ties in interestingly with the concept of *presence* (Senge et al.). Presence stresses the connection between wholes and details: the whole is present in each detail; if the hologram is split into two parts, each of them produces a whole hologram). At play here is *systems thinking*, the need for which is constantly on the increase. It may be said, although it may appear paradoxical, that a “present absent” person active in society as a whole is more present than someone who is present in only one place at a time. Or else he is not properly present anywhere ...
60. v. <http://earth.google.com/>.
61. v. Hamilo 2006.
62. Dahl 1999, 15.
63. The whole of the threat stemmed from the fact that computer memory space was a scarce commodity in the 1960s and memory could be saved by leaving out the first two digits of years. 1970 appeared as 70 in the computer. No one could say with any certainty what would happen when 99 became 00. Would this actually mean 1900 to the computer?
64. It has been feared that nanotechnology will generate new kinds of pollutants. Eric K. Drexler, a leading specialist in the field, wrote in his book “Engines of Creation” that minute, self-copying machines working at the level of the atom may proliferate to such an extent that they fall beyond the scope of human control, thus forming a “grey goo” that will ultimately destroy all life on earth.
65. Linkola described his model to the Greens in his objective programme in 1986. Let it be noted that Linkola had already presented his programme in a speech which was Nazi-like in spirit at a meeting of the Greens in Turku in 1985; this idealisation of the Nazis did not go down any better with an audience that resembled neo-hippies, and Linkola soon lost faith in the Greens. Linkola’s thoughts have been compiled in a book *Voisiko elämä voittaa, (Could life win?)* (Linkola 2004).
66. WDM (*Wavelength-Division Multiplexing*) is an optical distribution system for data transfer capacity in which light can be transmitted in the same fibre at different wavelengths. It brings an even faster and more efficient means of data transfer to the basic networks that use older technology, so the “utopias” of the information highway may actually be realised rather quickly. (<http://www.tml.tkk.fi/Studies/Tik-110.300/1997/Essays/wdm.html>)
67. v. Bezold 2005 and <http://www.accelerating.org/>. The idea of technological acceleration and singularity has been extensively examined by Ray Kurzweil; see Kurzweil 2005.
68. My thanks go to Risto Linturi for reminding me of the possible positive opportunities of a complex society of risk.
69. Toimintaympäristökuvaus (Description of the Operating Environment)... 2005, 19–21.

70. Source of diagram : Parjanne 2004
71. Population predictions are relatively reliable up to 10-15 years ahead, but they become less certain the further ahead the predictions stretch. The accuracy of population predictions relies essentially on assumptions concerning births, deaths and cross-border migration (*Toimintaympäristökuvaus...* 2005)
72. *Menossa mukana...*(Keeping up wit Change) 2005, 3.
73. Borg 2004.
74. Huttunen 2003.
75. Simons 2003.
76. WRI: <http://www.wri.org/wri/trends/citygrow.html>.
77. v. for example. Kivelä – Mannermaa 1999 ja von Bruun 2005.
78. Kostianen. –.Vadén – Välimäki 2003, 70.
79. v. website of Finnish Directorate for Immigration: <http://www.uvi.fi/netcomm/content.asp?article=1945>.
80. In the name of multiculturalism, it may, for example, be asked why polygamy is not allowed in Finland. It may be asked why a woman should not be able to be married to two or three men and on what grounds should something which is so clearly a private issue be a matter for society at all. It may be that in the future in one minority tribe people stick to monogamy while another tribe may decide otherwise.
81. *Toimintaympäristökuvaus...* 2005, 24–25.
82. e.g. Castells – Himanen 2001.
83. The situation may be similar in other areas of the social sciences.
84. A great deal of research has been conducted into people's happiness and living conditions, and western societies normally fare pretty well in them. Overall standard of living, technology and inter alia efforts to achieve ecologically sustainable development have had a positive effect on how satisfied people in western countries feel about their living conditions. It is also a fact that mass migration today is towards western countries rather than away from them.
85. Bell 2005a.
86. Dahl 1999, 15.
87. v. <http://www.newamericancentury.org/> and, for example, Dorrien 2004. Nationalist, America-centred religious sentiment has been fuelled by such as Herbert London, the director of the legendary Hudson Institute, v. London 2005. Neo-conservatism in the United States has been analysed by inter alia Dorrien (2004) and Halper-Clarke (2004).
88. The problem of governability was much discussed in the 1980s and 1990s, v. King-Schneider 1991 and Mannermaa 1993, 179–210, for example.
89. Glenn 2006.
90. Glenn 2006.
91. Bell 2005a.

92. Dahl 1999, 6.
93. Bell 2005.
94. It must be borne in mind that Freedom House appears to observe the world through rather American eyes. For example, it declares that a leading position for Americans in international issues is essential to the cause of human rights and freedom (www.freedomhouse.org).
95. www.freedomhouse.org.
96. Borg 1996, 215.
97. On the other hand, the growing differences in income and wealth levels have created new disparities between groups of people.
98. This is one of the reasons why Richard Florida's frequently quoted concept of the "creative class" is unhelpful.
99. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 298.
100. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 298–299.
101. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 299.
102. Mannermaa 1998, 134–135.
103. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 291–293.
104. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 293–294.
105. Karvonen - Paloheimo (2005), 304.
106. The meetings of the UN *World Summit on Information Society* (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>.
107. Bell 2005a. E.g. Arthur Schlesinger (1997) has warned about the problems associated with the models of direct democracy made possible by new information and communication technology, such as virtual town halls.
108. Bengtsson – Grönlund 2005, 157–158.
109. Bell 2005a.
110. v. <http://www.vn.fi/toiminta/politiikkaohjelmat/kansalaisvaikuttaminen/fi.jsp>.
111. It is not an entirely positive state of affairs that the Finnish *demos* has through its own decisions transferred some of its power to the *kratos*. This is the case when, for example, sporting or charity organisations appoint members of parliament to positions of trust, e.g. to be their presidents (or when local politicians also lead local civil society organisations). Members of parliament are decent, active people and, of course have the same rights as every one else to be involved in the demos. It is also understandable that civil society organisations wish to have politicians in prominent positions and at the same time have direct contacts for their organisations with official decision-making regarding e.g. funding grants. However, this practice could compromise the independence of civil society (*demos*) in respect of the coercive power of the state (*kratos*), in which professional politicians mostly operate. Furthermore, this also concentrates power in the hands of political players; it may also be asked (to take a populist view) just how devoted the one person can be to dozens of such positions of trust.
112. Cinquegrani 2006.

113. von Hertzen 1993, 233.
114. v. e.g. *Vaatelias vaalikansa* 2003.
115. v. <http://www.moveon.org/>
116. v. Wolf 2004.
117. v. Glenn – Gordon 2005 and <http://www.clickz.com/>. *Clickz.com* quotes research by Pew Internet & American Life Project (“*Buzz, Blogs, and Beyond: The Internet and National Discourse in the Fall of 2004*”), which compared how actively political blogs were used, their impacts and the *buzz* generation with political coverage in other media in the U.S. elections.
- According to Jyrki Kasvi, Howard Dean’s meetup.com support group had over 163 000 members and its campaign broke the Democrat record for fund-raising (40m \$ a year), Kasvi 2006.
118. Nationwide electronic voting took place in India in 2004. 1 075 000 electronic voting machines were used, of which each was able to record 3 840 votes. They were simple vote-registration machines, see Murata 2006.
119. The newspaper *Ilta-Sanomat* 10.3.2006: “Changes are to be made to the Election Act which will enable e-voting both at polling stations and from home. However, the introduction of e-voting would take place gradually and would depend on a separate decision by the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, a voter will always be able to vote using a polling card if he so desires. The Government approved a proposal on this subject today. The proposal will be made to Parliament on Friday in the President’s address. The introduction of e-voting is part of the overall reform of the electoral information system by the Ministry of Justice, which is expected to have been completed by 2010. Thus, e-voting may well be possible in the following parliamentary elections in 2011.” Experience of e-voting will be gained through a pilot project in the 2008 municipal elections in Karkkila, Kauniainen and Vihti.
120. For example, it has been claimed that in Venezuela, where electronic voting has been in use for five years, the administration of Hugo Chavez has breached electoral secrecy and collected data on people’s electoral habits, which it is claimed has led to people who voted against the government being dismissed from their jobs and to blackmail, etc. See http://quote.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000086&sid=abASlsAyXgoE&refer=news_index. One colleague of the writer of this report said that many of his friends have had to leave Venezuela and he has not himself voted in the last four elections for fear of ending up on Chavez’s black list.
121. Marx – Engels 1998, 47.
122. The term of office of the President will probably be shortened in the future, in spite of staunch opposition from some quarters. That said, the post itself will become increasingly superfluous if Finnish civil society becomes more powerful. It is difficult to say if the term of office will have been shortened before the post is abolished.
123. Dator 2006.
124. Of course, there will be problems, for example the possibility of populism. Difficult decisions that “the nation” never wants are shied away from. Now such decisions can be made immediately after the elections but not in the run-up to new ones. Populists are always looking to score cheap points.
125. <http://www.unpan.org/discover.asp>.

126. <http://webdomino1.oecd.org/COMNET/PUM/egovproweb.nsf>.
127. v. <http://virtualcapeverde.net/news2/index.php>.
128. Vasama 2006.
129. v. Glenn – Gordon 2005. In 2004 Peter Shane edited “*Democracy online: The Prospects for Political Renewal Through the Internet*”, a collection of articles on e-administration and its effects; contributors to the collection examines the threats and opportunities and its future as interest in democracy is renewed: http://www.routledge-ny.com/shopping_cart/products/product_detail.asp?isbn=0415948649
130. On electronic town meetings, see Becker – Slaton 2000.
131. The Finnish heavy metal band Lordi won the Eurovision song contest on Saturday, 20 May 2006. Showy masks that allow the people behind to maintain their privacy are part of the band’s image. The band leader Mr Lordi expressed on numerous occasions the wish that the newspapers would not publish face pictures of the group members. The first magazine to go against those wishes was *7 päivää* on Wednesday, 24 May 2006. Following publication, an intense battle of words ensued, and an electronic petition calling upon people to boycott *7 päivää* magazine was signed by over a hundred thousand people in a day. The number of signatures rose by thousands every hour. Two days later, on 26 May 2006, there were 220 000 signatures which had been sent from 120 000 addresses. The petition had been launched by one person. The magazine issued an apology to Lordi on 26 May 2006.
132. *The Stones of Mora* were where the kings of Sweden were chosen in the Middle Ages and were located about ten kilometres to the south-west of Uppsala. One of stones was large and flat, and the others were arranged in a circle around it. The chosen one was elevated to the central stone to be sworn in as king. Some of the stones still remains. (Wikipedia)
133. *Cyber Democracy 2001... 2001*.
134. Kasvi 2006.
135. To the older ones amongst us who do not have children: “am I boverred?” means “what do I care?”.
136. Inayatullah 2006.
137. Stedron 2004, 25.
138. Dahl 1999, 3.
139. Dahl 1999, 4.
140. Bell 2005.
141. Tuomioja 2004.
142. Different views have been expressed by, for example, Martin – Schumann 1998, Kortten 1999, Blum 2002, Chossudovsky 2003 and Chomsky 2005, and, as for Finns, by inter alia Väyrynen 1999, Saari 2004 ja Hakkarainen et al. 2005.
143. Stiglitz 2003. He discusses globalisation further in his book *Making Globalization Work* (Stiglitz 2006).
144. Bhagwati 2004.
145. Tiihonen – Tiihonen 2004.
146. Patomäki – Teivainen 2003.

147. The project is administered by the American Council for the United Nations University and is led by Jerry Glenn.
148. Glenn – Gordon 2006, 8–40.
149. Much has been said and written about UN reform. The subject is dealt with by e.g. Paul Kennedy in his book *The Parliament of Man*, Kennedy 2006.
150. Francis Fukuyama has pointed out that, in many developing countries and in the post-war period in the states which have become independent as a result of the fall of socialism, the problem is that the state is too weak, not too strong. In his view, state-building is needed in these countries, see Fukuyama 2004.
151. Tiihonen – Tiihonen 2004, 100 and Held 2000.
152. It is clear that local, national and regional interests will come to the fore, if there is a genuine attempt to create models for democratic global governance. An intellectual exercise: if a World Parliament were to be founded now, the seats in which would be allocated geographically and on the basis of population, China would receive about 20% of the seats. The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party would select one in every five of the world's MPs. Europe would account for 11% of the seats and Finland under 0.1%. In other words, if the World Parliament were to comprise 1000 members, Finland would get almost one representative in it. It is understandable that inter alia Europeans have an interest in defining what the powers of the World Parliament would be and how strictly the subsidiarity principle should be adhered to.
153. v. Tiihonen – Tiihonen 2004, 208–223.
154. Tiihonen – Tiihonen 2004, 151–152 and 156–198.
155. For example, Jean Monnet Professor Bernd Hamm has put forward a model based on the development of the UN. In this model, a World Parliament would constitute the first chamber. There would be one member per ten million inhabitants of the globe (i.e. half a member from Finland). The second chamber would be the current UN General Assembly. The World Parliament could also appoint a third chamber (“House of Councillors”). International courts would form a global jurisdiction; see Hamm 2006.
156. Patomäki – Teivainen 2003.
157. v. *Global Democracy: Civil Society Visions and Strategies (Go5)*... 2005.
158. On women's movements, see Masini 2006.
159. <http://www.newamericancentury.org/>.
160. Of course, a lot can happen over a time period of a hundred years.
161. v. e.g. *Global Democracy: Civil Society Visions and Strategies (Go5)*.
162. SDP (social democrats) produced an environment policy programme back in 1969, and the other parties talked about environmental problems before the Greens, but the Greens were the first truly to politicise environmental issues and place them at the heart of their own agenda and to use them as the key source of their political energy and support.
163. According to Manuel Castells, in the most technologically advanced societies, such as Finland, the information age began to push aside the industrial age with the advent of the silicon chip, i.e. in the 1970s.
164. Nelson 2006, 164–165.

165. Manninen 2000.
166. Florida 2002.
167. The idea that any old lightweight in advertising is according to the definition always more creative than someone working in industry is offensive and foolish. To Florida's credit, the spectrum of professions covered by his creative class is extremely broad: scientists, engineers, artists, musicians, architects, managers, specialist professionals and others whose work involves creating and dealing with concepts.
168. Attempts to make politics more interesting have been made. Juha Kostiaainen, Tere Vadén and Pauli Välimäki published a book with this purpose entitled "Seductive Politics" (*Viettelevä politiikka*) in 2003; see Kostiaainen – Vadén – Välimäki 2003.
169. v. e.g. Alkio – Pekkala – Raeste 2006.
170. In January 2001, 10 people wrote on Wikipedia, and there were 25 articles, all in English. In June 2005 there were 48 271 writers, there were 630 000 articles in English and 1 600 000 articles in all languages; see Benkler 2006, 72.
171. Inter alia Second Life, see <http://secondlife.com/>, has also seen substantial growth.
172. v. Youngsook Park Harmsen – Yongseok Seo 2006.
173. v. http://www.trendwatching.com/trends/GENERATION_C.htm and http://www.trendwatching.com/about/inmedia/articles/generation_c/digital_generation_leads_new_m.html.
174. Raivio, Helsingin Sanomat 29.1.2006.
175. v. for example Koistinen 2006.
176. http://www.tietoyhteiskuntaohjelma.fi/esittely/fi_FI/1142405427272/.
177. Mannermaa 1997, 20.
178. For more on weak signals, see Mannermaa 2004.
179. For example; the model presented by Pentti Linkola is a kind of version of meritocracy. A simple closed agrarian community in which industrial complexity is broken down, the most important source of energy is muscle power, essentially all the comforts of today are done away with is a meritocracy led by an elite "well versed in the art of survival".
180. v. Gorz 1982, Andersson 1983, Paloheimo 1981 and Mannermaa 2004, for example.
181. Anyone familiar with scientific thought and research knows that "believing" in scientific theory (for example, evolutionary theory) is a different matter altogether from blind and unsubstantiated faith in God. Scientific theory is always susceptible to being displaced by a better theory. (Karl Popper made famous the idea that scientific theory should be moulded so that it can be falsified i.e. quashed). *Self-correction* is a key feature of science.
182. v. Toffler 1980 and 1991.
183. World Transhumanist Association: <http://www.transhumanism.org>. The Finnish Transhumanist Organisation: <http://transhumanismi.org>. *World Transhumanist Association (WTA)* announced at the beginning of the 21st century that its task was to promote the ethical use of technology in extending the talents of the individual. Transhumanists wanted to support the development of technologies that make it possible for all people to enjoy a better mind, body and life. They wanted a person to enjoy his life "better than ever".

WTA was formed in 1998 and by 2005 according to its own figures it had 3,000 members in over 100 countries. The WTA was a typical movement in the Internet age, which spread on the web quickly and without recognising any geographical boundaries. In English, of course.

In their seven-point declaration, transhumanists believe that in the future the inevitability of ageing of a person, the limitations of human and artificial intelligence, unchosen psychology, suffering and the restriction of life to life on the globe only are parameters that can be refocused and modified. Transhumanists believe that research and development for technologies that contain such possibilities should be promoted, not hampered. A person should have the right, if he so wishes, to enhance his intellectual and physical qualities and thus control his own life and development beyond existing biological limitations. Transhumanists expect radical forward steps in technology in the future and would consider it tragic if positive steps were not to be taken on account of *technophobia*. It is considered a threat that negativity towards technology would lead to unmanageable crises, with technological development being pursued nonetheless. Transhumanists declare themselves to be politically independent and keen to launch citizens' forums where rational debate on the development of technology could take place.

184. For example, Oliver 2003, Schwartz et al. 1999, Kuusi 2004 and Mannermaa 2004. Veikko Launis emphasises the need to reinforce *genetic democracy*; in his view, this means “increasing information made available to citizens and their possibilities for participation and influence in decision-making regarding the guidelines and objectives of gene research and the applications of gene technology (Launis 2005, 23).
185. Čapek pursued his futures reflections in e.g. his brilliant satire *The Salamander War* from 1938 (Čapek 1992).
186. v. Stock 1993 and 2002.
187. Fournier 2003, 181–188.
188. In Bopo culture, the modern-day bourgeois have adopted the cultural taste of bohemian intellectuals, while the intellectuals have adopted the bourgeois faith in hard work; see Kostianen – Vadén – Välimäki 2003, 82-83.
189. Our scheme of values can be dogmatic and a canonised system of learning and belief, the society around which fills a person's head from outside right from early childhood. The other extreme is value nihilism, which does not regard any one value as being more important than any other. Often a value scheme, at least that of a modern westerner, is a hotchpotch of things that have been learnt and experienced through life, truisms and surprising topics that few would be able to hang on a pure ideological structure.
190. Borg 2006a.
191. This is not a deterministic claim: it does not always happen that way.
192. Harris 1977, see also Pulliainen 2006.
193. Diamond 2003.
194. Diamond 2003.
195. I have taken a closer look at the idea of progress in inter alia the book *The Future from transition to mosaic (Tulevaisuus – murroksesta mosaiikkiin)* (Mannermaa 1993).
196. Neo-liberalism is a problematic concept. It could be replaced by market liberalism, which is also problematic. The term “neo-liberalism” is used in this report because it is widely used and is understood in more or less the same way in spite of its problematic nature.

197. Shell International Limited 2005.
198. cf. Castells' thoughts on Finland as a model country in the world: as a developer and user of the latest technology and at the same time as a welfare society that reflects a mentality of solidarity.
199. For example, Inayatullah considers it likely that regional blocks will form: "Fortress Europe, Fortress Australia, Fortress America", Inayatullah 2006.
200. At the same time, the power of the President is reduced. Ultimately, the office may be abolished altogether as unnecessary and incompatible with democratic civil society.
201. Unfortunately, youth organisations themselves spoil a great many of the opportunities of school and university democracy in the 1970s. A particularly bad mark was left by the communist-led Teiniliitto ("Teen Alliance"), which seemed a lot more interested in breaking down the "bourgeois school system" and harassing teachers than in using youth genuinely to develop schools.
202. Futures panels should not be turned into elite events, such as national defence courses or economic policy management courses like those the Finnish Innovation Fund (Sitra) organised in the past, the primary objective of which was to polish the consensus view of world events at any given time. Without deliberately aiming at confrontations, futures panels can at best produce an "edge" and alternative solutions to the societal issues in evidence.
203. The European Union's draft constitutional treaty, which has not yet been adopted, contains a citizens' initiative, whereby one million EU citizens can use their signatures to invite the Commission to initiate legislation. In September 2006 the total of one million signatures was achieved by an initiative that proposed that the meetings of the European Parliament would be held only in Brussels. The current practice of meetings being held in Strasbourg as well is expensive for the EU and complicates the work of the European Parliament.
204. The introduction of citizens' initiatives requires more reflection than just what the minimum number of signatures should be for launching an initiative. For example, "genuinely" gathering 40 000 names of citizens, using modern methods such as the Internet, is such a big task that citizens' motives for doing so are probably strong. On the other hand, some large organisation – for example, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) with over one million members – would easily collect that many names. There is a risk of citizens' initiatives being mass-produced.
205. Risto Linturi contributed to the idea behind this proposal.
206. The idea of continuous voting would be supported by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE)'s planned "electoral term machine", the idea of which is to offer citizens in graphic form information about what members of parliament are doing at all times (v. Helsingin Sanomat 30.8.2006 and Mustajärvi 2006)
207. The claim that the prevailing democratic model is associated with the industrial frame of reference has recently been presented by Ruben Nelson (2006); the author of this report has made the point on many previous occasions (e.g. Mannermaa 1998) and also in this report.